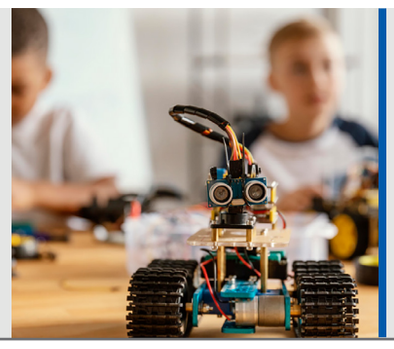
NATION

Kerala 1st to mandate robotics in schools

≫ Page: 4 ≪



BUSINESS

India's curbs on B'desh goods help local MSMEs

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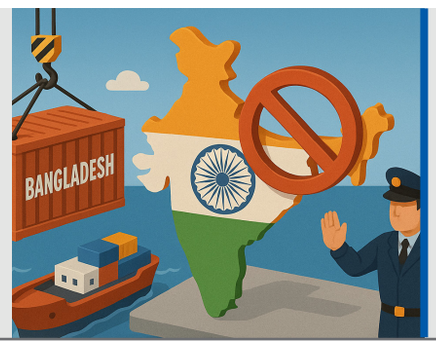

SPORTS

Max wins F1's Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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Israel kills 103 in new 'extensive' Gaza ground op

DEIR AL-BALAH, 18 MAY

Israeli strikes across the Gaza Strip killed at least 103 people overnight and into Sunday, hospitals and medics in the battered enclave said, as Israel intensifies its war in the territory that, after more than 19 months, shows no signs of abating. Israel's military on Sunday announced the start of "extensive" new ground operations in the Gaza Strip. The Israeli military also said that it intercepted a missile launched early Sunday by Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen.

—PTI

>>>More on Page 6

2 ex-Jihadists appointed to White House panel

WASHINGTON, 18 MAY

The Trump administration has appointed to the White House Advisory Board of the Religious Freedom Commission two former jihadist operatives from the United States. One of them, Ismail Royer, was reportedly trained by Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in Pakistan in 2000 and took part in attacks in Kashmir. In 2003, he was charged with conspiring to wage war against the United States and providing support to al-Qaeda and Lashkar-e-Taiba. The second, Zaytuna College co-founder Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, allegedly has links with Islamic jihadists and proscribed terror groups.

—Agencies

>>>More on Page 6

17 killed in building fire near Charminar

The building had only a single entry and exit

HYDERABAD, 18 MAY

Seventeen people, primarily children died in a blaze triggered by a suspected short circuit near the iconic Charminar in Hyderabad on Sunday. The fire broke out at a building in Gulzar House here, police said.

"All 17 who were shifted to hospitals were brought dead," a police official said.

A total of 21 people were in the building when the fire erupted. A narrow staircase was the only escape route for the inmates of the building, but they could not rush out.

The building housed jewellery shops on the ground floor, while the second and third floor were residential police said, adding that smoke spread and people suffocated.

Telangana Fire Department in a statement said the fire broke out on the ground floor and spread to the floors above.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed anguish over the loss of lives and announced Rs 2 lakh for the kin of those who died and Rs 50,000 to the injured.

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy similarly expressed shock over the incident and directed senior officials to take all necessary measures to rescue those trapped in the building.

"We will order an inquiry into the fire accident. There is no conspiracy angle in it," Transport and Hyderabad District in-charge Minister Ponnam Prabhakar said. Four families were residing in the building and many of them came to spend their vacation, he added.

Firefighters at the site near Gulzar Houz in the Old City area of Hyderabad, on Sunday *PHOTO: PTI*

Union Minister G Kishan Reddy also visited the spot and claimed that the fire tenders arrived late. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

LeT chief behind IISC attack killed

NEW DELHI, 18 MAY

Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist Razaullah Nizamani Khalid alias Abu Saifullah Khalid, who was the brain behind the 2006 attack on the RSS headquarters, was killed by three unidentified gunmen in Sindh province of Pakistan on Sunday, officials said.

He was also involved in the Indian Institute of Science terror attack of 2005 in the City, in which IIT professor Munish Chandra Puri was killed and four others injured.

Khalid was also the mastermind of the 2008 attack on a CRPF camp at Rampur in Uttar Pradesh in which seven personnel and a civilian were killed.

A close associate of Abu Anas of Lashkar, Khalid was the mastermind of the attack on the RSS headquarters at Nagpur in which all three terrorists were shot dead.

He left his residence at Matli this afternoon and was gunned down by assailants near a crossing at Badni in Sindh province, officials said.

Abu Saifullah Khalid *PHOTO: X/ PARAS NAYAK*

Khalid used to head the terror operations of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) from Nepal in early 2000 and had many aliases including Vinode Kumar, Mohammed Salim and Razaullah, they said. *—PTI*

US REJECTS 15 INDIAN MANGO SHIPMENTS

NEW DELHI, 18 MAY

At least 15 mango shipments from India were rejected by US authorities at key entry points, including airports in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Atlanta, due to documentation irregularities.

Exporters were given the choice of either destroying the mangoes or bearing the high cost of re-exporting them to India. Given the perishable nature of mangoes and the prohibitive expense of return shipping, all affected exporters opted to dispose of the fruit within the United States, according to The Economic Times.

The losses from these rejections are estimated to be around Rs 4.28 crore. *—Agencies*

'Who are you?' BBMP Chief heckled as City sinks in rainwater

BENGALURU 18 MAY

BBMP Chief Commissioner M Maheshwar Rao faced public ire on Sunday afternoon when angry residents in Mahadevapura zone blocked his tractor and questioned his very identity. "Who are you? Are you really the BBMP Commissioner?" a few residents demanded, furious over repeated flooding. "This is the third time our homes have gone under water—what are you actually doing about it?"

- BBMP Commissioner Rao, who was inspecting the worst-hit areas on a tractor, assured citizens that all departments were working overnight

The outburst came as a thunderous 40mm of rainfall till Saturday evening paralysed several parts of the City, leaving roads submerged, homes flooded and residents furious. From clogged stormwater drains to power outages, the civic response—or lack thereof—once again came under severe public scrutiny.

In areas like Sai Layout, Horamavu and NC Colony on Tannery Road, rainwater entered homes, turning daily life into a nightmare. In Jayanagar's East End, a massive tree collapsed onto parked vehicles. Near Panathur S Cross, knee-deep water stranded vehicles, with residents like Kamesh from Balagere left pushing their cars through flooded stretches.

BBMP Commissioner Rao, who was inspecting the worst-hit areas on a tractor, assured citizens that all departments were working overnight. He also clarified that Metro work had not caused the flooding, adding, "Drain paths are being cleared regularly, and residents must also stop dumping waste." *—Salar news*

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BBMP Chief Commissioner M Maheshwar Rao forced to take a tractor in the flood hit Sai Layout, following Saturday's 40mm of rainfall *PHOTO: SALAR*

Pak also starts diplomatic outreach

ISLAMABAD, 18 MAY

Hours after India decided to send its delegations to key partner countries to put across its resolve to tackle terrorism against the backdrop of Operation Sindoor, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced that he will send a diplomatic team to important world capitals to present the country's stance.

The decision was made by Sharif on Saturday after a telephone conversation with former foreign minister and chief of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, according to the Prime Minister's Office.

Sharif "decided to send a high-level diplomatic delegation to important world capitals to expose Indian propaganda," state-run Radio Pakistan reported.

He has entrusted the leadership of the delegation to Bilawal. The delegation includes Energy Minister Musadik Malik, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leader Khurram Dastgir Khan, Senator Sherry Rehman, former foreign minister Hina Rabbani Khar, Muttahida Qaumi Movement lawmaker Faisal Subzwari, former foreign secretaries Tehmina Janjua and Jalil Abbas Jilani.

Shehbaz Sharif *PHOTO: ANI*

The delegation will also "underscore Pakistan's sincere efforts for peace and stability in the region," according to the PM Office.

The delegation would soon visit the United States, the UK, Brussels, France, and Russia.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, meanwhile, is set to travel to China on 19 May, where he will engage in discussions with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

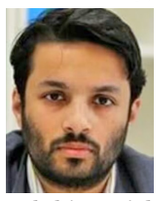
Afghanistan's Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi will join Dar on 20 May for a trilateral meeting, marking a significant diplomatic engagement amid ongoing regional challenges. According to the Foreign Office, Dar and Wang will conduct "in-depth discussions" regarding the evolving situation in South Asia and its implications for peace and stability, as well as reviewing the Pakistan-China relationship. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 2,3

Ashoka univ prof held for remarks on 'Op Sindoor'

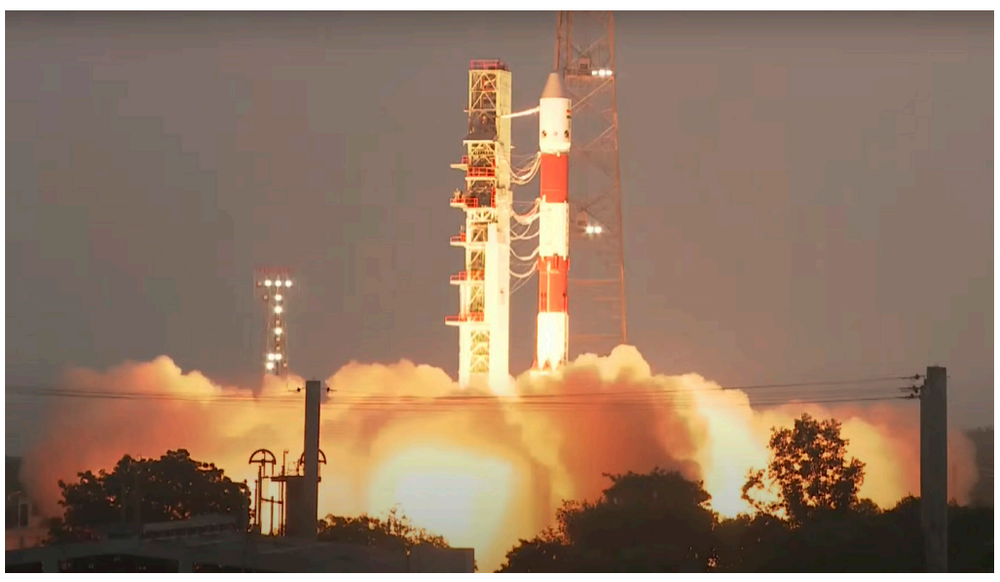
SONIPAT, 18 MAY

Ali Khan Mahmudabad, head of the political science department at Ashoka University, was arrested on Sunday following two FIRs lodged against him for allegedly endangering the sovereignty and integrity of India through his social media remarks concerning Operation Sindoor. The Haryana State Commission for Women had previously issued a notice to Mahmudabad regarding his comments, which he described as "misunderstood" and an exercise of his right to freedom of speech. *—PTI*



UNEXPECTED SETBACK

ISRO's 101th mission fails due to pressure issues: Chief



PSLV-C61 carrying the Earth Observation Satellite (EOS-09) lifts off from the first launch pad, in Sriharikota *PHOTO: PTI*

SRIHARIKOTA, 18 MAY

ISRO's 101st mission, an earth observation satellite onboard the agency's trusted PSLV rocket, could not be accomplished on Sunday following a pressure issue in the third stage of the launch vehicle, the space agency said.

Although the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) made a textbook lift-off at the prefixed time of 5.59am, the mission objectives could not be achieved.

"Today we targeted the 101st launch from Sriharikota, the PSLV-C61 EOS-09 mission. The PSLV is a four-stage vehicle and up to the second stage, the performance was normal. The third stage motor started perfectly but during the functioning of the third stage we are seeing an observation and the mission could not be accomplished," V Narayanan, ISRO Chairman, said. "...and the motor pressure--there was a fall in the chamber pressure of the motor case and the mission could not be accomplished. We are studying the entire performance,"

ISRO chairman V Narayanan *PHOTO: PTI*

The outcome of Sunday's launch is a surprise to many, since PSLV has emerged to be the most reliable launch.

Post lift-off, even till the second stage separation from the four-stage rocket, it was announced at the Mission Control Centre that they were being tracked by other centres of ISRO located in various parts of the country.

According to the data shared by ISRO, the PS1 (first stage) separation was scheduled for 111.64 seconds after lift-off, but it was achieved at 110 seconds.

The second stage ignition of the rocket was targeted to be achieved at 111.84 seconds, but the process occurred at 110.2 seconds leaving a marginal difference. Similarly, the PS2 separation was targeted at 264.34 seconds but it took place at 261.8 seconds.

Although things were proceeding on expected lines it was after reaching the third stage that a glitch surfaced. *—PTI*

GOGOI WORKED CLOSELY WITH ISI IN PAK: HIMANTA

GUWAHATI, 18 MAY

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday alleged that Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi visited Pakistan on an invitation from its spy agency ISI, and that he worked closely with the establishment of the neighbouring nation.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an official function here, Sarma asserted that the government has documentary evidence to support this claim, and "every proof will be presented before the public by 10 September".

"Gaurav Gogoi visited Pakistan on an invitation of the ISI. For the first time, I am saying this. We have documents of the same. He did not go for tourism purposes. He went there definitely for taking training," he said. *—PTI*

Debt-ridden farmer ends life in Periyapatna

MYSURU, 18 MAY

A distressed farmer, who was upset over crop failure and mounting debt, ended his life by consuming poison at Habatur village in Periyapatna taluk on Saturday. According to the police, the deceased has been identified as Ramegowda, 62, a resident of Habatur village. He consumed poison in his agricultural field. He was admitted to KR Hospital in Mysuru four days ago, after initial treatment at Periyapatna taluk hospital. Unable to respond to the treatment, Ramegowda died at KR Hospital on Saturday evening. The farmer fell into depression after suffering crop loss for three consecutive years. He had also run up a debt of around Rs 15 lakh, including loans from banks and moneylenders. Periyapatna Police registered a case. *—Salar News*

(Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support.)

Friends' dispute ends in murder in Raichur

RAICHUR, 18 MAY

A young man was killed around 4.30am on Sunday near Zakir Hussain Circle in Raichur city over a dispute related to setting up an idli stall, police said, identifying the deceased as Sadiq, 27. Reports said the accused, Kareem, allegedly stabbed Sadiq to death. Sadiq was bleeding profusely when he was rushed to RIMS Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries. Preliminary information suggests that a heated argument broke out between Sadiq and Kareem early Sunday morning over the idli stall. As the argument escalated, Kareem reportedly stabbed Sadiq. The Sadar Bazaar Police, under whose jurisdictional area the incident took place, have arrested Kareem and begun an investigation. Further details will emerge as the investigation progresses, they said. *—Salar News*

JEE Advanced held amid tight security

BENGALURU 18 MAY

The prestigious Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) Advanced was conducted on Sunday at 18 centres across the City under strict police supervision. The exam, organised this year by IIT Bombay, drew hundreds of aspirants from across Bengaluru aiming for admission into the prestigious IITs. To ensure a smooth and disruption-free examination, Bengaluru Police Commissioner B Dayananda had imposed prohibitory orders around all exam centres, declaring a 200-metre radius as restricted under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarika Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS). As part of the security measures, photocopy and computer shops near the venues were ordered to remain closed for the duration of the exam. In the City, police presence was visible at every centre, with staff on the ground till late night Saturday and early Sunday to ensure preparations were in place. Education experts noted that while JEE Advanced continues to test genuine aptitude, female participation remains low, with women comprising just 22 per cent of candidates in recent years. *—Salar News*

After heavy rains on Saturday the roads at Sai Layout logged with water creating havoc for the residents in Bengaluru on Sunday. BBMP claimed that Sai Layout lies at lower elevation than the adjacent stormwater drain, and was hence prone to clogging ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

Floods, waterlogging and powercuts plague City

BBMP Chief promises fixes but residents are skeptical

BENGALURU 18 MAY

Many parts of the City plunged into darkness as rains and heavy winds swept the City. Parts of Bommanahalli, South and East Bengaluru has power cuts for hours.

Traffic snarls crippled stretches like Domlur flyover, Manyata Tech Park and East End Road. The City's traffic police sent alerts about closed roads, while the BBMP control room scrambled to clear fallen trees.

Sunday's BBMP data reveals 65 complaints across eight zones of tree and branch falls—19 related to trees and 46 to broken branches. While 54 incidents were resolved by evening, 11 remained in progress, including cases in Yelahanka and the flood-hit South and East zones.

Residents of Horamavu remain sceptical.

"We've lived with this mess for 10 years," said Muralidhara J, a private firm employee. "I had to rent another house last year. We don't need sympathy—we need results."

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a yellow alert for Bengaluru and 22 other districts in State, warning of moderate to heavy thundershowers until 22 May.

Speaking to the media during a site visit, BBMP Chief Commissioner M Maheshwar Rao conducted via tractor in the waterlogged lanes of Sai Layout, Rao pointed out that the layout, developed by the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA), lies at lower elevation than the adjacent stormwater drain, causing frequent inundation.

A narrow railway vent further chokes water flow. Coordination has begun with the Railway Department to widen the vent, and a temporary jackwell with pumps will be installed by the BDA to manage floodwater.

Rao inspected the most affected areas and assured that permanent measures would be taken to resolve the recurring flooding issues in Sai Layout, located within BBMP limits.

A temporary sump and a dedicated pump team will also be deployed in Sai Layout, and waterlogged homes will be identified for compensation under disaster management provisions.

Further, Rao inspected rain-hit zones near Manyata Tech Park an Nagavara Junction. He instructed BBMP and Metro officials to expedite drain cleaning, cross culvert construction, and initiate a new Storm Water Drain (SWD) project involving private stakeholders.

Desilting near Thanisandra has already cleared 20 truckloads of silt, with more cleanup underway. *—Salar News*

Kumaraswamy, Ashoka slam Cong for flooding

BENGALURU, 18 MAY

Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy came down heavily on the State government on Sunday for the waterlogging.

Blaming the Congress government for the "rain-induced chaos" in the City, Kumaraswamy said this was not "Greater Bengaluru but Looters' Bengaluru". Kumaraswamy also raised serious concerns about the misuse and disappearance of public revenue and tax collections. In a statement, the JD(S) second-in-command said, "Greater Bengaluru sinks when it rains heavily and floats when it rains lightly." He alleged that potholes and open drains occupy the roads. "There isn't even spare soil to fill potholes, but tenders worth thousands of crores are floated for tunnel road. Weekly taxes, rising prices—do they think people are lifeless rocks? Should citizens be expected to silently endure and swallow everything? A land is not made of stones—it is made of people," the minister said in his statement.

Similarly, Leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly, R Ashoka said it was better to call it "Water Bengaluru" rather than saying "Greater Bengaluru". *—PTI*

> There isn't even spare soil to fill potholes, but tenders worth thousands of crores are floated for tunnel road
>
>
>
> -HD Kumaraswamy, JDS leader

> Better to say Water Bengaluru than Greater Bengaluru
>
>
>
> -R Ashoka, LoP

RS 15 CRORE LAND

27 acres of Hassan forest land freed of encroachments

BENGALURU, 18 MAY

Acting on the directives of Karnataka Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre, forest officials on Sunday cleared encroachments on 27 acres of forest land in Madab village, Baguruhobli of in Hassan district.

The forest land, classified as a reserve forest and valued between Rs 10-15 crore, had been illegally encroached upon. The encroachers had illegally cut down trees, attempting to convert the forest into a plantation.

A team of officials led by chief forest conservation officer, Ealukondal and deputy forest conservation officer, Saurabh removed the encroachments using machines.

A case has also been registered against the encroachers. After removing the encroachments, the team also planted saplings, and erected a board warning the public against encroachment.

For the past 20 years, 12 individuals had been illegally encroaching the forest land under the pretext of cultivating ginger. They produced fake documents to gain control over the land. They would fell valuable trees to set up coffee, coconut and areca nut plantations. Some revenue department officials had also illegally approved them.

Chief Conservator of Forests Yedukondalu V said that the department had issued notices to the encroachers multiple times to leave the land.

An FIR was also filed against them in 2008. The Forest Department also took action under Section 64A of the Karnataka Forest Act, 1963.

The Forest Department's after removing the illegal encroachments, will take adequate measures to the forest land to its natural state. *—Salar News*

The encroached forest land ***PHOTO: PTI***

BJP's Tejasvi to join India's delegation against Pak to US

BENGALURU, 18 MAY

BJP MP Tejasvi Surya on Sunday said he will be part of a multi-party delegation visiting the US and Latin America, to present India's stand against Pakistan-sponsored terrorism.

Surya will join Congress MP Shashi Tharoor and others on the trip, which runs from 23 May to 6 June.

The initiative is part of a major diplomatic outreach by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government, which has constituted seven multi-party delegations to travel to 32 countries and the

European Union.

Each team includes retired diplomats who will assist the MPs with policy and diplomatic engagement.

These delegations aim to present India's firm and unified stance against terrorism and assert the country's right to respond to cross-border attacks.

The BJP MP said, "I will be joining Dr Shashi Tharoor in the Indian delegation of MPs to the Americas. We will take to the world, India's message against Pakistan-sponsored terrorism and our demonstrated determination to put an end to it." According to Surya, Operation Sindoor signified a precise, measured and morally justified response to Pakistan-Backed Terrorism.

The operation has become a global call for justice and through this visit, MPs cutting across parties will in unison highlight India's stance in combating terror. *—PTI*

Will continue serving as party worker: Deve Gowda on turning 92

BENGALURU, 18 MAY

Former prime minister HD Deve Gowda, who turned 92 on Sunday, said he would continue to work as a party worker. The JD(S) patriarch celebrated his birthday in his party office.

"If you ask me what next, then I will tell you that I have a habit of not sitting idly in one place. I will toil as a worker for the party. I won't say more than this," Gowda told reporters here.

The former PM, however, regretted not being able to go to Tirupati to offer his obeisance on his birthday. "I had a habit of going to Tirupati on my birthday but due to knee pain I am not able to go there anymore," Gowda said.

Gowda was born on 18 May, 1933 in his ancestral village Haradanahalli in Hassan district.

He served as the 11th prime minister for 10 months from 1 June, 1996 to 21 April, 1997. The JD(S) supremo was also the State chief minister from 11 December, 1994 to 31 May, 1996.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi an State Chief Minister Siddaramaiah joined several leaders on Sunday in extending birthday greetings to Gowda. *—PTI*

HD Deve Gowda celebrating his birthday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

POLICE PROBE COW THEFT IN KITTANAHALLI

BENGALURU, 18 MAY

The village of Kittanahalli has been rocked by a suspected premeditated theft, with three cows stolen from outside a local residence under the jurisdiction of Madanayakanahalli police station in Bengaluru Rural district.

The stolen cattle belonged to farmer Krishnappa, who owns a total of twelve cows valued at approximately Rs 2.5 lakh. The incident is believed to have taken place late on Thursday night while the animals were tied up outside his house.

Among the stolen cows, one was due to calve in two months, while the other two were vital to the family's income.

CCTV footage from the area captured the thieves loading the cows into a vehicle before fleeing the scene. Preliminary investigations suggest that the gang may have surveilled the area for several days prior to executing the theft under the cover of darkness.

Villagers report that a gang dedicated to cattle theft has been operating locally, specifically targeting cows left tied outside homes overnight. As a result, residents are calling for enhanced police patrols and stricter enforcement measures. *—Salar News*

INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY

Kalaburagi's museums offer a portal to the past

KALABURAGI, 18 MAY

The museums in Kalaburagi offer a glimpse into the rich history through a collection of rare documents, texts and artefacts. As 18 May marks International Museum Day, here's a peak into what they offer.

Notable museums in Kalaburagi include the Science Centre Museum, the Government Museum located in the premises of the Archaeology Department, and Ayaz Numismatic Art Museum and Research Centre.

These museums house a rich collection of ancient coins, historical photographs, scientific and technological inventions, and relics from prominent South Indian dynasties such as the Satavahanas, Chalukyas of Badami, Rashtrakutas, Kalyani Chalukyas, Kalachuris, Bahmanis, Adil Shahis, and Nizams, all of whom ruled this region.

"Museums are treasure troves of knowledge," said Rajaram, Assistant Director, Archaeology Museums and Heritage Department. "Through the collection and exhibition of ancient artefacts, they help cultivate value-based knowledge."

The museums showcase artefacts dating as far back as 4000 BCE ***PHOTO: PTI***

At the Kalaburagi Government Museum, items dating from 4000 BCE to the modern era include sculptures, inscriptions, coins, weapons and manuscripts.

There are also 1st–2nd century terracotta beads.

The museums also showcase stone inscriptions in Brahmi script from the 1st–2nd century related to Buddhism. A copy of the Persian epic Shahnameh by Ferdowsi, along with palm leaf and paper manuscripts, is also preserved.

From the district's Maski areaStone Age and Neolithic tools such as stone axes and hand tools, and iron arrowheads have also been stored. *—Salar News*

Ground rumble sparks panic in Kozhikode

KOZHIKODE, 18 MAY

A mild ground shaking accompanied by a thunderclap-like rumble from underground triggered panic in a village in northern Kozhikode district, residents said. According to villagers, the shaking lasted only a few seconds on Saturday night.

Following complaints from residents of Ellikkampara in Kayakkody panchayat, officials from the geology department and local authorities visited the area and inspected it on Sunday.

Many residents reportedly ran out of their homes in fear.

Nadapuram MLA EK Vijayan told reporters there was no immediate cause for concern, but an expert study was necessary to determine the exact cause.

District geologist CS Manju, who inspected the site, said there had been no official report of an earthquake in the area thus far.

"It seems there is nothing to be concerned about at the moment. Some mild shaking might have occurred underground. An expert examination is needed to determine the details," she said.

A report will be submitted to the government. *—PTI*

HC to hear Celebi's plea on revoking security clearance

NEW DELHI, 18 MAY

The Delhi High Court will hear on 19 May pleas by Turkish company, Celebi Airport Services India Pvt Ltd and Celebi Delhi Cargo Terminal Management India Pvt Ltd against the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security's decision on revoking its security clearance in the "interest of national security". Their security clearance was revoked after Turkey condemned India's strikes on terror camps in Pakistan. Celebi, employs over 10,000 people and offers its services at nine airports. The company received the security clearance in November 2022. Celebi handles around 58,000 flights and 5,40,00 tonnes of cargo annually in India. *—PTI*

It won't happen again: Akhilesh on DyCM's remarks

LUCKNOW, 18 MAY

A controversy has erupted in Uttar Pradesh politics following an alleged objectionable post aimed at Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak on the Samajwadi Party's official X handle. Party chief Akhilesh Yadav stated he has sought assurances from his team to prevent such incidents in the future but urged Pathak to cease making inflammatory statements. Pathak, in response, called for his party members to study the works of noted socialist leaders Ram Manohar Lohia and Jayaprakash Narayan, asserting that the Samajwadi Party has strayed from true socialism. An FIR has been lodged following a complaint regarding the post, which reportedly contained derogatory remarks about Pathak's deceased mother. The complaint alleges anti-women sentiments from the Samajwadi Party and has led to charges of defamation and public mischief under various legal provisions.*—PTI*

EAM to embark on 3-nation visit on Monday

NEW DELHI, 18 MAY

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will embark on a six-day visit of the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany beginning Monday during which he is expected to highlight Pakistan's relentless support to cross-border terrorism. It will be Jaishankar's first foreign visit after the four-day-long military confrontation between Indian and Pakistani armed forces. It said Jaishankar will meet the leadership of the three countries and hold discussions with his counterparts on the entire gamut of bilateral relations and regional and global matters of mutual interest. It is expected that Jaishankar will also apprise his counterparts in the three nations about India's decision to launch Operation Sindoor following the Pahalgam terror attack. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Delhi govt issues SOP for bomb threats in schools

NEW DELHI, 18 MAY

Complying with a high court order, the Delhi government has rolled out a comprehensive Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for managing bomb threats in schools that includes a raft of measures like installing CCTV cameras, making evacuation plans and holding regular safety audits and mock drills. Designed by Directorate of Education (DoE), the protocol has a four-tier strategy focusing on prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. It aims to instill a culture of preparedness and vigilance while ensuring a swift and coordinated response during emergencies, DoE said. Schools are now required to submit a monthly safety checklist to their respective district authorities, it said. *—PTI*

Pause in India-Pak hostilities to continue

Anti-terror raids continue at multiple parts of J&K; no DGMO talks held on Sunday

NEW DELHI/POONCH/ JAMMU, 18 MAY

There is "no expiry date" to the understanding reached between Indian and Pakistani Director Generals of Military Operations (DGMOs) on cessation of hostilities nearly a week back, the Indian Army said on Sunday.

The clarification came following reports that the arrangement between the two militaries on stopping the hostilities is ending this evening.

The Director Generals of Military Operations (DGMOs) of India and Pakistan on 12 May decided to continue with the understanding of halting all military actions.

The arrangement was originally reached for two days when the DGMOs held a conversation over the hotline on 10 May.

It also made it clear that there are no "DGMO talks" scheduled for Sunday as reported in a sector of the media.

DGMO Lieutenant General Rajiv Ghai speaking during the press conference on Operation Sindoor, in New Delhi, on Sunday *PHOTO: ANI*

In the conversation, the two officers focused on continuing the commitment that both sides must not fire a "single shot" or initiate any "aggressive and inimical" action against each other.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday called on Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar. Singh's meeting with the Vice President comes days after Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan called on Dhankhar.

The meeting comes against the backdrop of the India-Pakistan military conflict in the aftermath of the terror attack in Pahalgam.

The Jammu and Kashmir Police on Sunday conducted raids at multiple locations with the intention of dismantling terror networks in the border district of Poonch, officials said.

The raids were conducted at nearly one-and-a-half dozen places, mostly targeting houses of overground workers and relatives of terrorists operating from Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), they said.

The officials said several electronic devices were seized during the raids that were still underway at some places.

However, no one was arrested during the operation carried out by teams led by senior officers, they added. *—PTI*

42 unexploded shells destroyed in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch

JAMMU, 18 MAY

Security forces have successfully destroyed 42 unexploded shells in various forward villages near the Line of Control in Poonch district, Jammu and Kashmir. The operation, conducted by the Indian Army in collaboration with local police, was aimed at clearing civilian areas following recent military confrontations between India and Pakistan. These remnants of cross-border shelling were a significant threat to local residents. The controlled operation adhered to safety protocols to safeguard civilian life and property. This proactive measure underscores the commitment to protecting vulnerable border communities and restoring normalcy in conflict-affected regions. *– PTI*

The controlled operation adhered to safety protocols to safeguard civilian life and property *PHOTO: ANI*

IIT Bombay suspends ties with Turkish institutes

MUMBAI, 18 MAY

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay has suspended all agreements with Turkish universities, following Turkey's support to Pakistan amid heightened tensions with India. In a post on its official X handle, the institute said, "Due to the current geopolitical situation involving Turkey, IIT Bombay is processing suspension of its agreements with Turkish universities until further notice." The institute currently has a faculty exchange programme with some Turkish institutions. The development has come following Turkey's support to Pakistan during 'Operation Sindoor' and the subsequent escalation of conflict with India. *– PTI*

Youth held in Haryana's Nuh for spying for Pakistan

GURUGRAM, 18 MAY

A 26-year-old man, Armaan, has been arrested in Haryana's Nuh district on suspicion of espionage for Pakistan, police said . The arrest occurred on Saturday after he allegedly shared sensitive information about the Indian Army and military operations with a staff member at the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi. Acting on intelligence from central investigative agencies, police apprehended Armaan, who has reportedly been engaging in these activities for an extended period via WhatsApp and social media. Following a search of his mobile, evidence including conversations and visual media with Pakistani contacts was found. He has been remanded in custody for six days. *– PTI*

Cong: Govt picked leaders should follow conscience

NEW DELHI, 18 MAY

The Congress on Sunday said it did not stop anyone from being part of diplomatic delegations to be sent to various countries and its leaders named by the government must listen to their conscience and contribute to the exercise.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications, Jairam Ramesh accused the government of politicizing the exercise and having "malicious intent" for selecting only one of the four leaders nominated by Congress,

The Congress had nominated Anand Sharma, Gaurav Gogoi, Syed Naseer Hussain, and Amrinder Singh Raja Warring for the all-party delegations to be sent abroad to explain India's stance on Pakistan-backed terrorism.

Jairam Ramesh *PHOTO: PTI*

Only Sharma has been included. Congress leaders, ShashiTharoor, Manish Tewari, Amar Singh and Salman Khurshid have been included in the delegations by the government.

Congress frowned upon Tharoor heading one of the delegations.

51 political leaders, parliamentarians and former ministers cutting across party lines will be part of the seven delegations, which will visit 32 countries and the EU headquarters in Brussels in Belgium

Ramesh asked the delegations not to divert attention from the Congress' demands to have all-party meetings chaired by Modi and for a special Parliamentary session to reiterate the resolution adopted on February 22, 1994.

Meanwhile, the Kerala Congress on Sunday distanced itself from the controversy surrounding Tharoor's decision to accept the Centre's invitation, stating that it is for the party high command to comment on the matter. *– PTI*

'Pak spy' YouTuber's costly trips puzzle cops

NEW DELHI, 18 MAY

Social media influencer **Jyoti Malhotra** has been arrested for allegedly spying for Pakistan. A senior police officer in Hisar, Haryana, said this case shows that modern warfare isn't just about fighting at the borders anymore. Now, people like social media influencers who can hide in plain sight can be used to secretly spread messages for enemy countries.

The police are questioning how Malhotra was able to afford her trips, as her income doesn't seem enough to cover the expenses. Most Indians who visit Pakistan are closely watched and can only go to specific places listed on their visa.

But Malhotra reportedly received VIP treatment in Pakistan because of her connection with a Pakistani High Commission officer Danish and other intelligence agents. She was allegedly given police security during her visit.

Malhotra's YouTube channel 'TravelwithJo' has 3.82 lakh subscribers. Her Instagram and Facebook pages also have large followings with around 1.39 lakh and 3.2 lakh followers respectively. Hisar Superintendent of Police, Shashank Kumar, said that Pakistani intelligence agents, called PIOs, are trying to use influencers like Malhotra to spread their ideas in India. *– Agencies*

Missing CRPF jawan found hanging from tree

BHUBANESWAR, 18 MAY

A CRPF jawan, who had been missing since 16 May, was found hanging from a tree in Odisha's Bolangir district on Sunday, police said.

The deceased was identified as Ganeshram Bhoi, a resident of Ghasian village under the Larambha Police Station limits in the district, a senior officer said.

According to the family members of Bhoi, the CRPF jawan had come to his village on leave, and he went missing on Friday.

Some villagers spotted Bhoi hanging from a tree at an isolated place and informed the local police station, the officer said.

The reason behind the death of the CRPF personnel is yet to be ascertained, he added. *– PTI*

Owaisi flays RSS outreach to Muslims

HYDERABAD, 18 MAY

Asaduddin Owaisi, leader of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM), has dismissed recent conciliatory statements by RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat towards Muslims as "hypocritical cheap talk". In an interview with PTI, Owaisi asserted that efforts by the Hindutva organisation to reconcile are undermined by the anti-Muslim actions of its followers. "If you think they are wrong, why are you not stopping them?" he challenged.

Owaisi further commented on the BJP's electoral success, attributing it to the failure of opposition parties and their consolidation of Hindu votes. He rejected claims that his party siphons off anti-BJP votes, arguing that Muslims remain politically marginalised despite being the largest minority in India. "Our fight is that we don't want to remain voters. We want to be citizens," he stated.

Owaisi labelled Bhagwat's outreach as part of an ideological battle, asserting that the RSS aims to dismantle India's diversity. He emphasised the need for equitable political representation for Muslims and a halt to viewing them merely as a vote bank. His criticisms resonate strongly within the community, especially amidst ongoing discussions on Muslim representation in India's political landscape. *– PTI*

Ex-union min RCP Singh joins Jan Suraaj Party

PATNA, 18 MAY

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's former close aides Prashant Kishor and RCP Singh joined hands on Sunday, vowing to take on their ex-mentor in the assembly polls due in a few months.

Singh, a former Union minister, announced the merger of his Aap Sabki Aawaz, floated barely six months ago, with Kishor's Jan Suraaj Party.

Kishor, a former political strategist, was JD(U)'s national vice president until being expelled in 2020. Singh, who had been principal secretary to the Bihar CM, enjoyed key organizational posts in the party, even briefly heading it.

Singh quit in 2022 when Kumar accused him of accepting a Union cabinet berth without seeking approval.

"Both of us will work together and the Jan Suraaj Party will form the government in the coming assembly polls. We will focus on forming a new government free of crime, corruption and communalism," Kishor said. *– PTI*

RCP Singh with Prashant Kishor *PHOTO: PTI*

PROTECT THE CONSTITUTION

Stalin urges 8 counterparts to oppose presidential reference

CHENNAI, 18 MAY

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin on Sunday urged his counterparts in 8 states, including West Bengal, to oppose the Presidential reference to Supreme Court on deadlines for the President, Governor over Bills and batted for a coordinated legal strategy.

Stalin, President of the Tamil Nadu's ruling DMK said, it is well known that the advisory jurisdiction of the Supreme Court cannot be invoked or exercised when the issue in question has already been decided by an authoritative pronouncement of the court.

"Yet, the BJP government has pressed ahead with seeking a reference, which points to their sinister intent," he alleged.

He requested the Chief Ministers of non-BJP ruled states to oppose this reference sought by the President before the Supreme Court.

MK Stalin *PHOTO: ANI*

- Stalin requested the Chief Ministers of non-BJP ruled states to oppose this reference sought by President before Supreme Court.

Writing to them, in a letter dated 17 May, he said: "We must evolve a coordinated legal strategy before the court and present a united front to preserve and protect the basic structure of the Constitution, as upheld by our Supreme Court in its historic judgement (State of Tamil Nadu vs Governor of Tamil Nadu). I look forward to your immediate and personal intervention in this vital issue."

Besides West Bengal, Stalin wrote to the chief ministers of Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala, Jharkhand, Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir.

The Tamil Nadu chief minister said President Droupadi Murmu, under the advice of the Union government, posed the Supreme Court 14 questions, under Article 143 of the Constitution on 13 May, 2025. *—PTI*

'B'desh exports curb aims at ensuring fairness'

NEW DELHI, 18 MAY

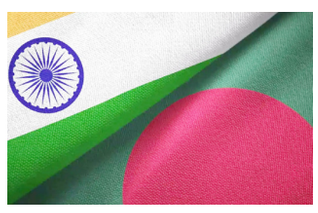
India's decision to curb Bangladeshi exports of ready-made garments and several other consumer goods through land ports is aimed at ensuring fairness and equality in bilateral trade, government sources said on Sunday.

India's trade relationship with Bangladesh will be based on "reciprocal terms" and the decision on restricting exports of ready-made garments from the neighbouring country is in response to Dhaka imposing similar trade barriers on Indian yarn and rice, they said.

India on Saturday decided to allow entry of ready-made garments from Bangladesh only through Kolkata and Nhava Sheva sea ports and barred imports of a range of consumer items through land transit posts in the Northeast.

Besides ready-made garments (RMG), plastics, wooden furniture, carbonated drinks, processed food items, fruit flavoured drinks, cotton and cotton yarn waste will not be allowed to enter India through land customs stations and check posts in Meghalaya, Assam, Tripura and Mizoram, and Phulbari and Changrabandha in West Bengal, according to a government notification.

The new restrictions for Bangladeshi consumer goods were imposed five weeks after New Delhi ended a nearly five-year-old arrangement for trans-shipment of Bangladeshi export cargo to third countries via Indian airports and ports. *– PTI*



- India's trade relationship with Bangladesh will be based on "reciprocal terms".

Delhi opens first brain health clinic

NEW DELHI, 18 MAY

Delhi has inaugurated its first dedicated brain health clinic at the Indira Gandhi Hospital in Dwarka, marking a significant step in providing accessible neurological care. Inaugurated by Health Minister Pankaj Singh, the clinic aims to deliver "district-level access" to a range of neurological treatments. Part of India's Brain Health Initiative and supported by NITI Aayog with technical assistance from IHBAS, the clinic will offer services for stroke, epilepsy, Parkinson's, dementia, migraine and various other disorders. Ten more such centres will be opened across Delhi. This initiative aligns with NITI Aayog's recommendations and reflects Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta's commitment to creating a "future-ready" health system. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Digha temple attracts global devotees

KOLKATA, 18 MAY

The newly-inaugurated Jagannath temple in Digha, West Bengal, is experiencing a surge in interest from international tourists, particularly devotees of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). This temple serves as an alternative for foreigners who cannot enter the renowned 12th-century Jagannath shrine in Puri. People from nearly 150 counties attended the temple's inauguration on 30 April. Inquiries about accommodation options in Digha are increasing as tourism is expected to flourish. Digha Sankarpur Hoteliers' Association president, Susanta Patra, anticipates a significant rise in tourist footfall. *—PTI*

UP man starves wife to death, gets life sentence

BAREILLY, 18 MAY

A man has been sentenced to life imprisonment for starving his wife to death in 2021. Additional district and sessions judge Gyanendra Tripathi announced the sentence on Saturday, also imposing a fine of Rs 10,000 on the convict, identified as Manoj, a resident of Kareli village. Following a quarrel, Manoj had locked his wife, Mamta, in a room without food or water for an entire week. The situation came to light when neighbours reported a foul odour to the police. Upon investigation, officers discovered Mamta's decomposed body wrapped in a blanket under the bed. Her father subsequently filed a case against Manoj. The court established that Mamta succumbed to hunger and thirst, leading to the conviction. *—PTI*

Bengal teachers' protest continues on fourth day

KOLKATA, 18 MAY

Hundreds of school teachers in Kolkata continued their protest for the fourth consecutive day outside the West Bengal Education Department headquarters, following a Supreme Court verdict that invalidated their appointments. Approximately 1,000 members of the Deserving Teachers Rights Forum, including those who passed the 2016 West Bengal School Service Commission examination, are demanding job reinstatement. Chinmoy Mondal, a forum representative, insisted they would not leave until Education Minister Bratya Basu meets them to address their concerns.Protesters also alleged that 10-12 teachers received police notices related to clashes that erupted on 15 May, which resulted in injuries among demonstrators during police action. Despite pleas for calm, the protesters remained resolute in their agitation. *—PTI*

Firefighters and medics at work after a fire broke out in a building near Gulzar Houz in the Old City area of Hyderabad on Sunday; a firefighter rescues a little girl injured in the fire and carries her to an ambulance; Union Minister G Kishan Reddy interacts with people at the site of the fire accident *PHOTO: PTI*

Hyd fire: Narrow building entrance spells doom

Narrow stairs too turned fatal when 'short-circuit' triggered fire near Charminar

HYDERABAD, 18 MAY

For the 17 people who perished in a blaze near the historic Charminar here on Sunday, the house located in a tunnel-like alley with a narrow entrance and staircase proved to be the death trap, preventing their escape.

AIMIM chief and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi said that generations of a family have been residing in the building for 125 years.

Only two members of the family, which ran one of the city's oldest jewellery shops, survived.

The blaze, triggered by a suspected short circuit, killed 17 persons, including eight children.

It took two hours and 11 fire tenders to douse the fire. Rescue personnel wore oxygen masks to enter the blazing house.

The narrow entrance of the building was engulfed with fire and smoke. The access to the first and second floors was a staircase of one meter width, which made it difficult for occupants to escape.

- AAIMIM chief and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi said that generations of a family have been residing in the building for 125 years. The occupants had been reportedly sleeping when the fire broke out

The occupants had reportedly been sleeping when the fire broke out.

Zahid, an eyewitness said that a woman informed him and his friends about the fire that erupted in the building and that there were family members with children inside.

"As the main door was engulfed in flames, we broke the shutter and a wall to enter inside.

We found seven people in one room and six others in another room in the first floor. We were not able to save them due to the fire," he said.

The Osmania Hospital mortuary, where bodies were sent for autopsy, wore a grim look as relatives burst into tears in shock. *—PTI*

Cong slams govt for flaws in Covid death data

NEW DELHI, 18 MAY

Jairam Ramesh *PHOTO: PTI*

The Congress on Sunday attacked the Centre over alleged mismatch between the official Covid-19 death toll and the figures reflected in the civil registration system data, saying it would be too much to expect this government to show regret for its "tone-deaf" actions but when history is written, it will be sure to record this "act of depravity".

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said more than five years ago, the world was ravaged by the Covid-19 pandemic.

"It was clear – even in that moment – that India underwent devastation on a scale that we hadn't seen for more than a century," he said on X.

From the migrant crisis to the manufactured shortage of vaccines, from the mass deaths and oxygen shortages to the prime minister's insistence on campaigning in West Bengal rather than prioritising human lives – the cruelest and vilest impulses of the Modi government – were on display during the pandemic, Ramesh alleged.

"While we always knew that the government had systematically underreported Covid-19 deaths, we now learn that there were an additional 20 lakh deaths reported across India in 2021 alone," he said, adding that most of these can be attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic. *—PTI*

HYBRID LEARNING

Professionals flock to IITs, IIMs for upskilling courses

NEW DELHI, 18 MAY

Online upskilling courses offered by premier institutions like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) are witnessing a surge in enrolments, especially among early-career professionals aiming to stay relevant in today's dynamic job market.

Technopak Advisors' report 'Online Higher Education, Certification and Upskilling Market in India' says nearly 70 per cent of learners have less than three years of work experience.

Covering areas such as artificial intelligence, big data, electric vehicles, business management and leadership, these programmes blend academic depth with real-world applicability. Many are delivered in hybrid formats.

Entrepreneurs and senior professionals enroll in these programmes to boost efficiency and stay competitive.

Learning platforms such as Jaro Education, Simplilearn, TimesPro and TalentEdge have also reported growing participation. Jaro, for instance, says half of its learners have over two years of experience, while 23 per cent have more than five.

The Coursera's Micro-Credentials Impact Report 2025 states that 97 per cent of Indian employers are willing to offer higher starting salaries to candidates with micro-credentials. 95 per cent say these certifications reduce training costs and onboarding time, while 98 per cent believe they improve candidate competitiveness.

A major driver of this trend is the rapid technological changes. *—PTI*

MACT grants ₹41L to road accident victims' family

THANE, 18 MAY

The Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (MACT) in Thane has ruled in favour of bereaved family members, granting Rs 41 lakh as compensation following a road accident that occurred in 2020. The victims, Arun Martand and his son Akshay, died on 11 January when their motorcycle was struck by a speeding multi-utility vehicle.

Bhangrath's family originally sought Rs 47.55 lakh in compensation, highlighting his earnings of approximately Rs 25,000 a month as a milk seller and driver at the time of his untimely death at the age of 34. In the judgment issued on 8 May, the tribunal awarded Rs 40.32 lakh for loss of dependency and future prospects, alongside Rs 70,000 for loss of estate, funeral expenses, and filial consortium. *—PTI*

Fund crunch leaves 200 new PHCs in M'rashtra defunct

MUMBAI, 18 MAY

More than 200 newly constructed primary health centres (PHCs) and sub-centres in Maharashtra are lying unused, as funds have not been allocated for essential supplies and staff, a public health department official said.

PHCs and sub-centres are crucial to the rural healthcare system and are the first respondents during medical emergencies and outbreaks of diseases in villages, providing affordable treatment. They run national health programmes, including immunisation drives and provide essential care to women and children.

- The public health department approved the construction of more than 400 PHCs and sub-centres between 2021 and 2025. Of these, 210 buildings were constructed, but haven't received funds for furniture, power connection and staff

The official said several such units built over the last four years have remained non-functional, as they haven't received funds for furniture, power connection and staff.

"The department approved the construction of more than 400 PHCs and sub-centres across the state between 2021 and 2025, and of these, 210 buildings have been constructed, but many remain non-functional," he said.

The official said in some instances, fully-constructed buildings have remained unutilised for nearly two years. "These centres are yet to start functioning for want of basic operational support," he said.

According to the department's data, 98 PHCs were sanctioned in the last four years. "Only 64 PHCs are operational, and 34 remain locked due to an acute shortage of staff and essential supplies," the official added. *—PTI*

Tiger attacks kill 2 in M'rashtra

CHANDRAPUR, 18 MAY

Two individuals tragically lost their lives due to tiger attacks in the buffer zone of the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) in Chandrapur district, Maharashtra, on Sunday, as reported by forest officials.

The first incident occurred when villagers ventured into the forest early in the day to collect tendu leaves. Maroti Shende, a 64-year-old resident of Wadhona village, was attacked by a tiger in the Talodhi forest range within the Nagbhid tehsil. Despite being rushed to a rural hospital in Sindewahi, he succumbed to his injuries.

In a separate incident, Rushi Pendor, from Shivpur-Chek village in Mul tehsil, was fatally mauled by a tiger. Pendor went missing on Saturday, and his body was discovered following a search operation in the Mul range of the reserve's buffer zone.

These incidents raise concerns about the rising prevalence of man-animal conflicts, with a total of eight fatalities recorded in Chandrapur district since 10 May, including attacks on three women in Sindewahi tehsil.

Authorities urge villagers to exercise caution when entering forested areas to minimise risks. *—PTI*

Eight deaths in tiger attacks in Chandrapur district since 10 May raise concerns about the rising man-animal conflicts *PHOTO: X*

CHANGING WITH TIME

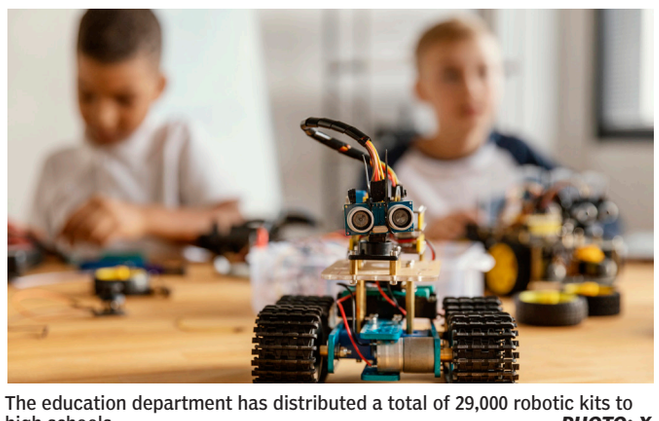
Kerala 1st to mandate robotics in schools

T'PURAM, 18 MAY

Kerala has emerged as India's first state to make robotics education mandatory for all 4.3 lakh students of Class 10, starting from the upcoming academic year on 2 June.

The chapter on robotics in the tenth-grade ICT textbook will empower students to explore fundamental robotics concepts by engaging in activities. These include circuit construction, utilising sensors and actuators and controlling electronic devices using computer programming, K Anvar Sadath, CEO of KITE and chairman of the ICT Textbook Committee said.

KITE is the technical arm of the Kerala government's General Education Department. A total of 29,000 robotic kits have been distributed to high schools.



The education department has distributed a total of 29,000 robotic kits to high schools *PHOTO: X*

Kerala was also the first state to make artificial intelligence learning accessible to Class 7 students during the past year. It has been incorporated into the textbooks for grades 8, 9 and 10.

The practical experience gained from the robotics curriculum piloted for Little KITEs (Kerala's IT club for students) helped shape this comprehensive rollout for Class 10 students.

The hands-on activity challenges students to utilize components from the provided robotic kits to construct an automated sanitiser dispenser that activates upon detecting a han.,

Students will also delve into creating AI-powered smart home automation systems.

The innovative learning approach is designed to equip students with the skills to address a wide range of practical problems through cutting-edge technologies.

While 9,924 teachers have been trained, dedicated robotics training for more will be organised in July.

Additional robotic kits will also be made available to extend support to unaided schools following the state syllabus. *—PTI*

Over 350 insurgents arrested in Manipur

IMPHAL, 18 MAY

Security forces in Manipur have arrested over 350 insurgents during a crackdown on extortion rackets following the imposition of President's Rule in February. Insurgent groups, mainly from the Imphal Valley demanded money for resolving matrimonial disputes and personal feuds. Authorities have warned the public to report extortion attempts or face legal action.

Laishram Ramesh Singh alias'Tiger', from the banned United National Liberation Front (UNLF) was caught while settling a matrimonial dispute and found with Rs 21.5 lakh and two mobile phones. He handled extortion and collected money from government officials and businesses.

- Insurgents have adapted by using fake SIM cards and VoIP calls via apps like WhatsApp and Telegram to extort money through coded messages

Insurgents have adapted by using fake SIM cards and VoIP calls via apps like WhatsApp and Telegram to demand money through coded messages. Some civil society groups are also involved in collecting extortion money.

Groups involved include UNLF, People's Liberation Army, Kanglei YawolKanbaLup, People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak and Kuki-based factions such as CKMA and CKLA. *—PTI*

INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY

A couple looks at Soviet anti-aircraft missile systems at the Museum of Artillery in St. Petersburg, Russia, early Sunday, during "Museum Night," an annual event dedicated to International Museum Day. The Museum of Artillery, consists a collection of Russian military uniforms, equipment, and decorations. Russian Ministry of Defense manages the museum
PHOTO: – PTI

India-Pak halt conflict: Will the fragile peace last?

India and Pakistan stepped back from the brink of catastrophe on 10 May after a US-brokered ceasefire brought rapidly escalating hostilities between the two countries to an end. But tensions are still running high.

The Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, said on 12 May that India has only "paused" its military action against Pakistan and would "retaliate on its own terms" to any attacks.

The latest episode in the long-running conflict between these nuclear powers was triggered on 22 April. Militants from a group known as the Resistance Front, which India says is a proxy for the Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist group, killed 26 tourists in the picturesque resort town of Pahalgam in Indian-administered Kashmir. India alleges Pakistan's involvement, which it denies.

The fact that India and Pakistan were able to agree to a ceasefire as escalations spiralled is reason for optimism. It shows that internal calculations and international pressure can pull the two parties back from the brink. However, the ceasefire represents an incredibly precarious peace. Can it be sustained?

Recent experience shows that sustained ceasefires are possible between the two states. In February 2021, India and Pakistan's militaries signed a ceasefire to end four months of cross-border skirmishes. The agreement was a reaffirmation of an original ceasefire understanding from 2003.

Only two violations were recorded across the line of control separating Indian-and Pakistani-administered Kashmir for the rest of the year, dropping to one in 2022. This compared to 4,645 such incidents in 2020.

The reduction led to optimism that armed rebellion in Kashmir, which both India and Pakistan claim in full, was in persistent decline. In March 2025, just one month before the deadly Pahalgam attack, security sources in India estimated that there were only 77 active militants operating on the Indian side of the border.

A man stands inside a house damaged after cross-border shelling by Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district
PHOTO: PTI

The drop in violence was a result of combined international and domestic pressure on Pakistan.

This listing forced Pakistan to introduce a string of policy measures to curb terrorism financing. Pakistan was removed from the list in 2022 due to significant improvements in its counter-terrorism framework.

In recent years, as Pakistan's powerful army has grappled with overlapping economic and political crises, this strategy has been rolled out again.

The popularity of Pakistan's army, for example, diminished significantly following the arrest of Pakistan's leader, Imran Khan, in 2023.

These cross-border operations are allegedly carried out by Pakistan's so-called Border Action Teams, comprised of Pakistani special forces and militants from insurgent groups. Pakistan has never acknowledged the existence of such teams.

By 1 April, tit-for-tat firing across the line of control had also already surpassed the total number of incidents in 2023 and 2024 combined.

The latest ceasefire was agreed in the context of hostilities escalating beyond previous levels. Military strikes were launched outside Kashmir itself at military bases deep in Pakistani territory and in north-western India.

Certain actions by Islamabad were also widely interpreted as attempts to signal the country's nuclear capabilities. These included the decision to convene the National Command Authority, the body responsible for control and use of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal.

The move may not have been a genuine alert. But the possible willingness to resort to nuclear threats is particularly concerning as, unlike India, Pakistan does not have a "no-first use" nuclear weapons policy.

At the same time, some of the decisions taken by India after the Pahalgam attack may compel further support for the insurgency in Kashmir. This brings with it the risk of further escalation between India and Pakistan in the future.

India has suspended the Indus Water Treaty, which governs the use of water from the Indus River. Pakistan lies downstream from India and is heavily dependent on the river for irrigation and public consumption.

Intervention from global powers such as the US may again be able to prevent future hostility from spiralling out of control. However, substantive talks are unlikely.

While the Trump administration initially signalled a hands-off approach to relations between India and Pakistan, deeming it "none of our business", it is now clear how rapidly matters can escalate between them.

—The Conversation

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR سالار

Only 35% women are STEM graduates globally

Women make for only 35 per cent of Science, Tech nology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) graduates globally with no significant progress made in last decade, according to UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring (GEM) team which has flagged low confidence in mathematics and negative gender stereotypes as major reasons behind the trend.

The team which analyses the development and trends in education sector across the globe pointed out that the digital transformation is led by men and women constitute only 26 per cent of workforce in data and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

"Critical data from 2018–23 shows that women made up only 35 per cent of STEM graduates globally, with no progress over the past 10 years. Part of this can be explained by the fact that girls' confidence in mathematics appears to be knocked early, even when they perform well. Part of it can be explained by negative gender stereotypes that also prevent women from pursuing STEM careers," a member of GEM team told PTI.

"Only one in four women with an information technology degree took up digital occupations in the European Union, compared with over one in two men.

The digital transformation is led by men. Women constitute only 26 per cent of employees in data and artificial intelligence, 15 per cent in engineering, and 12 per cent in cloud computing across the world's leading economies.

This is a loss to society," the official added.

The team has noted that while 68 per cent of countries globally have policies to support STEM education, only half of these policies specifically target girls and women.

The GEM has launched an advocacy brief that proposes actions countries should take to redress the balance.

"Countries need to include gender-responsive school counselling and career orientation to nurture girls' talents and interests in STEM and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

A key element of this kind of gender-sensitive orientation is professional training in gender-responsive guidance for teachers and counsellors. Career guidance programmes should aim to raise awareness among parents to enable them to play supportive roles free of biased notions of gender-appropriate careers," the brief read.

The advocacy brief has noted that girls need to see women succeeding in STEM fields in order to believe that they can do it too and counselling and guidance can help girls see STEM pathways they would not have considered, while role models and mentorship activities can challenge stereotypes about 'gender-suitable' subjects.

"Schools can create STEM clubs and organisations that are led by female students and teachers. They can also partner with local businesses and organisations to provide girls with opportunities to meet and learn from female STEM professionals and enable them to see that their skills are valuable in technical occupation.

Female mentors can also improve the culture of STEM workplaces, which can be male-dominated and hostile to women," it said.

Training teachers and school leaders to start early in overcoming STEM gender bias, enhancing girls' digital literacy to close the skills gender gap and reviewing teaching and learning materials for negative gender bias on "appropriate" study choices, are among the recommendations made by GEM.

"A framework of digital competences should be prepared to provides guidance for the skills all learners should acquire, no matter their gender.

Teachers should work towards overturning girls' mathematics anxiety, helping make STEM relevant to girls' interests as well as addressing their own bias and stereotypes.

"In primary school, teachers can use gender-neutral language when teaching STEM concepts and provide opportunities for girls to explore STEM activities. They can also invite female STEM professionals to speak to the class," the brief said.

—PTI

Women remain underrepresented in STEM, hindered by stereotypes, low confidence, and lack of role models
PHOTO: PTI

Chai to chewy: India's youth embrace bubble tea craze

- Soon, desi twists like jamun kala khatta, chilli guava and mango matcha began making their way into the mix -- because when it comes to flavour, India doesn't stay in the bubble for long.

From classic milk and passion fruit to jamun kala khatta and mango matcha, and that too in slurpy pearls, India's age-old chai story is turning a page with the young and not so young catching on to the bubble tea trend.

The bubble tea market in India is projected to more than double from USD 450 million in 2024 to USD 930 million by 2033, according to market research and advisory firm Custom Market Insights, turning it into a full-fledged "Bubble Tea Party". And one that's brewing across India – and ages.

It's almost everybody's cup of tea.

So, while Gurgaon-based Prisha and Rakesh Mandavaya, like many other Indians, run on a steady stream of tea throughout the day, their 12-year-old son is also following suit. Except his beverage of choice is a little trendier.

"He is completely hooked on bubble tea. I'm not sure if it's the sugar rush, the fruity flavours, or just the fun of slurping up those chewy tapioca pearls... children really seem to love the whole experience. We've always been a tea-loving family but his obsession with this new-age tea concoction has caught us off guard," Prisha, a homemaker in her forties, told PTI.

The quirky drink, which has made its mark across the Philippines, North America, and beyond, is now stirring up a storm in India with new-age brands like Boba Bhai, Nomi Tea, and Harajuku Tokyo Café taking the lead.

Originally concocted in 1980s Taiwan as a refreshing treat for school children, bubble tea has since gone global, adopting many names along the way – from "boba" and "QQ", a Chinese slang for chewy, to the playful "booboo" in parts of the West.

Mansi Bhatt, a college student in her 20s, is one of them.

"I first tried bubble tea in Delhi, and it was refreshing, hip, and trendy.

It gives you that sugar rush and social media gratification all at the same time. I love the taste, and the fact that you can experiment with different flavours and toppings makes the whole experience even better," the Dehradun-based said.

While the younger crowd makes up the core bubble tea fanbase in India, its appeal is quickly expanding.

And even though flavours like classic milk, taro, matcha and even cheese foam got Indians into the bubble tea game, it didn't take long for local taste buds to take over. Soon, desi twists like jamun kala khatta, chilli guava and mango matcha began making their way into the mix -- because when it comes to flavour, India doesn't stay in the bubble for long.

Bubble tea brews a trendy twist to India's age-old chai culture
PHOTO: PTI

The unprecedented rise of bubble tea has prompted new-age coffee brands to make space for this latest entrant in the tea family.

Tea is the world's second most popular beverage after water.

Young and old alike embrace bubble tea, adding fun tapioca pearls to classic chai culture.

For instance, First Coffee, which claims to be India's fastest-growing specialty coffee brand, brought in international experts to train their team in developing a new range of boba tea.

Despite its smooth growth trajectory, the beverage's success story comes with a "sweet" concern -- its high sugar content -- often flagged by worried parents.

The brands, already aware of what they admit is a "valid concern", are responding by customizing sugar levels and providing sugar-free alternatives.

The bubble tea industry, well, it's clearly bubbling over.

—PTI

Israeli strikes across Gaza kill 103

Hospitals shut throughout northern Gaza citing 'siege', as Israel intensifies Operation Gideon

DEIR AL-BALAH, 18 MAY

Israeli strikes across the Gaza Strip killed at least 103 people overnight and into Sunday, hospitals and medics in the battered enclave said, as Israel intensifies its war in the territory that, after more than 19 months, shows no signs of abating.

More than 48 people were killed in airstrikes in and around the southern city of Khan Younis, some of which hit houses and tents sheltering displaced people, according to Nasser Hospital, which said more than half of the dead were women and children.

In northern Gaza, a strike on a home in the built-up Jabaliya refugee camp killed nine people from a single family, according to the Gaza health ministry's emergency services.

Another strike on a house in Jabaliya killed 10, according to the civil defence, which operates under the Hamas-run government.

The bloodshed comes as Israel ramps up its war in Gaza with a new offensive named "Gideon's Chariots", in which Israel says it plans to seize territory, displace hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to Gaza's south and take greater control over the distribution of aid.

Meanwhile, the Health Ministry in Gaza said the main hospital in the territory's north has been forced to close because of escalating Israeli strikes and what it said was a siege of the facility. The Indonesian Hospital was the last remaining functioning public hospital in the war-battered area.

The Israeli military had no immediate comment on either the overnight strikes or claims of fighting around the hospital. —*PTI*

Palestinians inspect a house after it was hit earlier by an Israeli army strike, killing at least 10 people, at Jabalia in northern Gaza Strip on Sunday

IDF CLAIMS IT INTERCEPTED HOUTHI MISSILE

TEL AVIV, 18 MAY

A ballistic missile launched at Israel by the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen was successfully intercepted by air defences, the IDF said. There are no immediate reports of injuries or damage in the attack.

Sirens had sounded across central Israel. An early warning was issued to residents, alerting civilians of the long-range missile attack via a push notification on their phones. —*Agencies*

PHOTO: PTI

Rwanda repatriates refugees from camps in Congo

GOMA, 18 MAY

In a significant development, hundreds of Rwandan refugees, who have been residing in camps in eastern Congo since the 1994 genocide, were repatriated on Saturday, as confirmed by the UN refugee agency. This repatriation follows an influx of Rwandan-backed rebels seizing control of key areas in the region. Among the returnees, primarily women and children, 360 individuals crossed the border in buses arranged by Rwandan authorities, aided by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the charity Save the Children. Rwandan officials aim to repatriate a total of 2,000 refugees. Prosper Mulindwa, the mayor of Rubavu, welcomed the returnees, emphasising their importance to national development. —*PTI*

Storms kill 27 in US, Kentucky worst-hit with 18

LONDON, 18 MAY

Severe storms sweeping through the US Midwest and South have resulted in at least 27 fatalities, with Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear reporting 18 deaths in his state alone. The devastation in Kentucky included a powerful tornado that ravaged homes, particularly in Laurel County, and injured 10 others critically. Rescuers continue their search for survivors in the aftermath, as local emergency shelters open to aid those displaced. In neighbouring Missouri, five people died in St. Louis due to storm-related incidents, and a tornado touched down, causing significant damage. The National Weather Service is monitoring ongoing threats as severe weather systems, including tornadoes and damaging winds, are expected to persist in the region. —*PTI*

Explosion at California fertility clinic; 1 killed

PALM STRINGS, 18 MAY

An explosion in Palm Springs, California, on Saturday resulted in one fatality and significant damage to a fertility clinic, prompting the FBI to label the incident an "intentional act of terrorism." Akil Davis, head of the FBI's Los Angeles office, confirmed the clinic was deliberately targeted while authorities worked to identify the deceased individual, believed to be the perpetrator. Four others sustained injuries, and there are concerns that the explosion may have been livestreamed. The blast, reported at around 11am, caused extensive damage to the building, with debris scattered across the area. Multiple federal agencies are investigating. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

British guide sets record with 19th Everest climb

KATHMANDU, 18 MAY

Kenton Cool, a British mountain guide, has made history by summiting Mount Everest for the 19th time, breaking his own record for the most ascents by a non-Sherpa guide. The 51-year-old from southwest England reached the peak of the 8,849-metre mountain on Sunday, accompanied by several climbers. Iswari Paudel of Himalayan Guides Nepal confirmed that Cool was on his way down from the summit. Having first conquered Everest in 2004, Cool has climbed the mountain almost every year, despite setbacks in 2014, 2015 and 2020. Currently, only Nepali Sherpa guides have made more ascents, with the record held by Kami Rita at 30. As the spring climbing season approaches its end, more climbers are expected to make attempts before the weather deteriorates. —*PTI*

IMF sets 11 conditions for Pak

ISLAMABAD, 18 MAY

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) slapped 11 new conditions on Pakistan for the release of the next tranche of its bailout programme and warned that tensions with India could heighten risks to the scheme's fiscal, external, and reform goals, according to a media report on Sunday. The 11 new conditions take the total to 50.

HERE ARE THE NEW CONDITIONS:

1. Approval of a new Rs 17.6 trillion budget, an increase in the debt servicing surcharge on electricity bills and lifting restrictions on import of more than three-year-old used car.
2. Agriculture Income Tax: Four federating units will implement the new laws through the establishment of an operational platform for processing returns, taxpayer identification, a communication campaign, and a compliance improvement plan.
3. Governance Action Plan: Publish the plan based on recommendations by the IMF. The purpose is to identify measures to address critical governance vulnerabilities.
4. Prepare and publish a plan outlining the post-2027 financial sector strategy.
5. Energy tariffs rebasing: The government must maintain energy tariffs at recovery cost levels by 1st July.
6. Gas tariff: The government must maintain energy tariffs at cost recovery levels by 1 July via semi-annual gas tariffs.
7. Make the captive power levy ordinance permanent by the end of this month.
8. Remove the maximum Rs3.21 per unit cap on the debt service surcharge.
10. Special Technology Zones: Prepare a plan to fully phase out all incentives and other industrial parks and zones by 2035.
11. Used motor vehicles: submit to the Parliament required legislation for lifting all quantitative restrictions on the commercial importation of by July end. —*PTI*

Pak province reports 300 attacks in 2025

PESHAWAR, 18 MAY

Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province has witnessed 284 terrorist incidents so far in 2025, according to an official report on Sunday.

The northwestern province remained one of the hardest hit in the country by militancy. A report by the Counter-Terrorism Department said that 148 terrorists have been killed across the province so far this year.

As many as 1,116 suspects have been named in terrorism-related cases across the province, of which 95 have been arrested so far. In 2024, 732 attacks were reported in the province, up from 651 in 2023. This marked the highest number of attacks since 2009 and 2010. —*PTI*

PUTIN: WE DON'T NEED NUKES TO BEAT UKRAINE

MOSCOW, 18 MAY

Even without the use of nuclear weapons, Russia has ample forces to complete its Ukraine campaign and achieve its set goals, President Vladimir Putin has said in an interview to State TV's Kremlin correspondent.

"Several attempts were made to force us to make this mistake (the use of nuclear weapons) but we have ample force to achieve objectives without this option.

"The objectives are about the elimination of the original causes of this crisis, the formation of conditions for the long-lasting and sustainable peace and the provision of security to Russia," he said in the interview which will be telecast on Sunday night.

In February 2022, at the start of the campaign, Putin had described the "denazification and demilitarisation of the former Soviet republic and its neutral status".

Long-lasting peace and protection of rights of the Russian-speaking population in Ukraine must be the core result of Russia's special military operation, Putin said in the interview with VGTRK journalist Pavel Zarubin.

Putin has repeatedly highlighted the need to take Russia's interests into account when addressing the root causes of the crisis, the only way to establish long-term peace, which is what Moscow wants, TASS news agency reported. —*PTI*

Russia launches one of its biggest drone attacks on Ukraine

KYIV, 18 MAY

Russia launched one of its most intense drone attacks on Ukraine since the beginning of its invasion in 2022. Russia fired a total of 273 exploding drones and decoys overnight on Sunday, Ukraine's Air Force said. Of those, 88 were intercepted and a further 128 lost, likely having been electronically jammed. The attacks targeted Kyiv, Dnipropetrovsk and Donetsk regions.

According to data from Ukraine's Air Force, this would be the largest drone attack Russia has launched against Ukraine, although Ukrainian officials have not confirmed this.

The number of drones fired exceeds Russia's previous largest known single drone attack of the war, when Russia pounded Ukraine with 267 drones on the eve of the war's third anniversary.

Kyiv regional Governor Mykola Kalashnyk said a 28-year-old woman was killed in a drone attack and three other people, including a four-year-old child, were wounded.

Meanwhile, Russia's Defence Ministry said its air defences shot down seven Ukrainian drones overnight, and a further 14 on Sunday morning.

US President Donald Trump said he plans to phone call Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday, followed by his Ukranian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy and leaders of various NATO countries, about ending the war. —*PTI*

A Russian soldier fires a 152mm howitzer towards Ukrainian positions from a Russian post inside Ukrainian territory on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

2 ex-jihadists find place in White House panel

NEW DELHI, 18 MAY

The Trump administration has appointed to the White House Advisory Board of the Religious Freedom Commission two former jihadist operatives from the United States.

One of them, Ismail Royer, was reportedly trained by Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in Pakistan in 2000 and took part in attacks in Kashmir.

Royer, has served 13 years in prison on terror-related charges. In 2003, he was charged with conspiring to wage war against the United States and providing support to al-Qaeda and Lashkar-e-Taiba.

A The Washington Post report said that Royer also pleaded guilty in 2004 to aiding the use of firearms and explosives. He was sentenced to 20 years, and served 13 years, the report said.

The second jihadist appointed to the panel, Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, is alleged to have links with Islamic jihadists and proscribed terror groups, said Lara Loomer, a political activist and close ally of US President Donald Trump. —*Agencies*

POPE CALLS FOR UNITY

Pope Leo XIV takes his first popemobile ride through St Peter's Square ahead of the inaugural Mass of his pontificate before an estimated 200,000 pilgrims, presidents, patriarchs and princes on Sunday. The first American Pope vowed to work for unity, so that the Catholic Church becomes a symbol of peace in the world **PHOTO: PTI**

PORTUGESE VOTE FOR A THIRD TIME IN THREE YEARS

LISBON, 18 MAY

Voters in Portugal return to the polls Sunday for a third general election in three years, as the country's increasingly fragmented political landscape defies efforts to unite behind policies on pressing national issues such as immigration, housing and the cost of living.

Hopes that the ballot might end the worst spell of political instability in decades for the European Union country of 10.6 million people could be dashed, however. Polls suggest the election is poised to deliver yet another minority government, leaving the Portuguese back where they started. "What the polls indicate is that there will not be major differences from the last election results," says Marina Costa Lobo, head researcher at Lisbon University's Institute of Social Sciences. That outcome could bring another scramble to build political alliances in Parliament, she said.

Polls have suggested that the partnership, Democratic Alliance, again has a small lead over the Socialists but likely not enough to secure 116 seats in the 230-seat National Assembly. —*PTI*

Prime Minister Luis Montenegro speaks to supporters during an election campaign in Lisbon on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

MECHANICAL FAILURE SUSPECTED

Mexican Navy ship strikes Brooklyn bridge; two killed

A masted Mexican Navy training ship, the Cuauhtémoc, sits stranded after hitting the Brooklyn Bridge on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

NEWYORK, 18 MAY

A Mexican navy sailing ship, the Cuauhtemoc, struck the Brooklyn Bridge in New York City on Saturday night, tragically fatal for two crew members and injuring many others. The 142-year-old bridge escaped significant damage, but at least 19 individuals aboard the vessel required medical treatment following the incident, which occurred around 8.20pm local time.

"We saw someone dangling, and I couldn't tell if it was just blurry or my eyes, and we were able to zoom in on our phone and there was someone dangling from the harness from the top for like at least like 15 minutes before they were able to rescue them," an eyewitness said.

- Reports indicate the vessel had just departed a Manhattan pier en route to the open sea when it veered off course due to a possible mechanical failure

Mayor Eric Adams confirmed the fatalities, stating that two of the four who suffered severe injuries later died. Reports indicate the vessel had just departed a Manhattan pier en route to the open sea when it veered off course due to a possible mechanical failure.

It was unclear what caused the ship to veer off course. New York Police Department Special Operations Chief Wilson Aramboles said the ship had just left a Manhattan pier and was supposed to have been headed out to sea, not toward the bridge. He said an initial report was that the pilot of the ship had lost power due to a mechanical problem, though officials cautioned that information was preliminary. Videos show a tugboat was close to the Cuauhtemoc at the time of the crash.

As midnight approached, the damaged ship was assisted by tugboats and carefully moved up the East River to dock. The Cuauhtemoc, used for naval training, had arrived in New York on 13 May and was scheduled for a global tour, visiting 22 ports in 15 nations over 254 days. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

India still largest market for electric autorickshaws: IEA

NEW DELHI, 18 MAY

India continues to be the world's largest market for electric three-wheelers for a second year in a row as sales rose nearly 20 per cent to reach about 7 lakh vehicles in 2024, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said in a report. In its Global EV Outlook 2025, the Paris-based energy watchdog said India continues to drive most growth in the global electric three-wheeler market. Despite the global three-wheeler (3W) market shrinking 5 per cent from the previous year, electric 3W sales grew more than 10 per cent to surpass 1 million vehicles in 2024. Electric 3W sales represented almost one-quarter of all 3W sales, up from one-fifth in 2023, it said.*—PTI*

India's coal import drops to 263.56M tonnes in FY25

NEW DELHI, 18 MAY

India's coal import declined 1.7 per cent to 263.56 million tonnes in the 2024-25 financial year. The country's coal import was 268.24 million tonnes (MT) in 2023-24. During 2024-25, non-coking coal import was 167.10 MT, lower than 175.96 MT imported in the previous year. Coking coal imports was at 54.08 MT in 2024-25 as against 57.22 MT in 2023-24. According to data compiled by mjunction services ltd -- a B2B e-commerce platform -- coal import in March also declined to 22.79 MT over 23.96 MT in the year-ago period. Of the total imports in March, non-coking coal imports stood at 14.84 MT, against 15.33 MT imported in the same month last year. Coking coal import volume was 4.41 MT, against 5.34 MT imported in March 2024.*—PTI*

10,000 Indian stakeholders to join SS Expo

NEW DELHI, 18 MAY

Over 10,000 stakeholders from India and abroad are expected to attend the Global Stainless-Steel Expo 2025 (GSSE 2025), scheduled from 4–6 June in Mumbai, organiser Virgo Communications and Exhibitions (VCE) announced. The three-day event will bring together the entire stainless steel value chain — manufacturers, processors, fabricators, architects, and end-users — to explore growth opportunities. Key topics include boosting demand, export strategies, emissions targets, R&D, and innovation. VCE Director Anitha Raghunath said the expo would showcase advanced technologies and sustainable solutions shaping the sector's future. The expo will highlight applications in renewable energy, EVs, public transport, defence and infrastructure.*—PTI*

Zoff Foods aims to expand offline sale, begin exports

MUMBAI, 18 MAY

Chhattisgarh-based Zoff Foods, which is expecting its revenue to cross Rs 100 crore this financial year, is planning to expand its offline presence in the country and begin exports, a top company executive has said. However, the company is now growing, therefore, it has started focusing on the offline presence as well. Founded in 2018, Zoff Foods specialises in premium-quality spices with a manufacturing unit in Raipur in Chhattisgarh. When asked about exports, Agrawalla said, the company has begun the process of exploring overseas markets and understanding the compliances, and it hopes to begin shipments in July-August this year. The company has a total capacity to produce 700-800 tonnes per month at its Raipur unit, of which Zoff Foods is currently utilising only 30-40 per cent. *—PTI*

India's curbs on B'desh goods help local MSMEs

Key goods limited to select ports or barred from land routes

NEW DELHI, 18 MAY

Restrictions imposed by India on certain Bangladeshi goods will help the domestic ready-made garment industry, particularly MSMEs, to enhance their competitiveness, according to experts.

On 17 May, India restricted imports worth USD 770 million from Bangladesh, covering nearly 42 per cent of bilateral imports. Key goods like garments, processed foods, and plastic items are now limited to select sea ports or barred from land routes entirely.

Ready-made garments, valued at USD 618 million, now face strict routing through only two Indian seaports. This severely limits Bangladesh's most valuable export channel to India. "Indian textile firms have long protested the competitive edge enjoyed by Bangladeshi exporters, who benefit from duty-free Chinese fabric imports and export subsidies, giving them a 10-15 per cent price advantage in the Indian market," think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said.

PHOTO: CHATGPT

The port restrictions will help Indian MSMEs (micro, small, and medium enterprises) from the textiles sector, GTRI founder Ajay Srivastava said.

Sharing similar views, Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) Vice Chairman A Sakthivel said it was a demand of domestic exporters to impose these restrictions.

"It is a good decision now taken by the Indian government. The domestic industry will benefit from this," Sakthivel said.

The move comes in response to Bangladesh's recent restrictions on Indian yarn, rice, and other goods, as well as the imposition of a transit fee on Indian cargo's departure from past cooperation.

- The move comes in response to Bangladesh's recent restrictions on Indian yarn, rice, and other goods, as well as the imposition of a transit fee on Indian cargo's departure from past cooperation

Even as Dhaka moves closer to Beijing, India should not shut the door to dialogue, Srivastava said.

"As the bigger neighbour and regional power, India has a greater responsibility to lead with patience, keep communication open, and avoid using trade as a weapon. Rebuilding trust through diplomacy and economic cooperation is still possible," he said. *—PTI*

BOOSTED BY CEASEFIRE

FPIs pump ₹18,620 cr into equities in May

NEW DELHI, 18 MAY

Foreign investors continue to show confidence in the country's equity market, infusing Rs 18,620 crore so far this month, driven by a combination of global tailwinds and improving domestic fundamentals.

This positive momentum follows a net investment of Rs 4,223 crore in April, marking the first inflow in three months, data with the depositories showed.

Prior to this, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) had pulled out Rs 3,973 crore in March, Rs 34,574 crore in February, and a substantial Rs 78,027 crore in January.

FPIs are likely to continue their buying interest in India, and therefore, large caps will be resilient, VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments, said.

According to the data from the depositories, foreign portfolio investors made a net investment of Rs 18,620 crore in equities this month (till 16 May). The total outflow stood at Rs 93,731 crore in 2025 so far.

The sustained buying spree that began in mid-April continued in the current month. "A key catalyst was the ceasefire between India and Pakistan, which eased regional tensions and lifted investor sentiment," said Himanshu Srivastava of Morningstar Investment. *—PTI*

Nine top-10 firms witness mcap surge of ₹ 3.35L cr

NEW DELHI, 18 MAY

Nine of the top-10 valued firms added Rs 3.35 lakh crore in their market valuation last week in tandem with a positive trend in equities, led by Reliance Industries.

HDFC Bank, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Infosys, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever and ITC were the gainers among the top 10 companies. Bharti Airtel was the only laggard.

Last week, the BSE benchmark gauge jumped 2,876.12 points or 3.61 per cent.

The market valuation of Reliance Industries jumped Rs 1,06,703.54 crore to Rs 19,71,139.96 crore. ICICI Bank's valuation surged Rs 46,306.99 crore to Rs 10,36,322.32 crore.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

TCS added Rs 43,688.4 crore to take its valuation to Rs 12,89,106.49 crore. The market capitalisation (mcap) of Infosys zoomed Rs 34,281.79 crore to Rs 6,60,365.49 crore and that of HDFC Bank rallied Rs 34,029.11 crore to Rs 14,80,323.54 crore.

Bajaj Finance's market valuation edged up by Rs 32,730.72 crore to Rs 5,69,658.67 crore.

The mcap of ITC climbed Rs 15,142.09 crore to Rs 5,45,115.06 crore and that of State Bank of India went up by Rs 11,111.15 crore to Rs 7,06,696.04 crore.

The valuation of Hindustan Unilever climbed Rs 11,054.83 crore to Rs 5,59,437.68 crore.

However, the mcap of Bharti Airtel declined by Rs 19,330.14 crore to Rs 10,34,561.48 crore.

Reliance Industries remained the most valued firm followed by HDFC Bank, TCS, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India, Infosys, ITC, Bajaj Finance and Hindustan Unilever. *—PTI*

Adani Defence, Sparton to indigenise India's Sonobuoys

AHMEDABAD, 18 MAY

Adani Defence & Aerospace has signed a binding collaboration agreement with Sparton (DeLeon Springs LLC), a subsidiary of Elbit Systems and a leading provider of advanced Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) solutions. This marks a significant step towards localising the assembly of complex electronic systems and sonobuoys for both Indian and global markets.

With this partnership, Adani becomes the first private Indian company to offer indigenised sonobuoy solutions—critical devices used to detect, locate, and track submarines, thereby enhancing Undersea Domain Awareness (UDA) and naval security.

For decades, India has relied heavily on imported sonobuoys, creating strategic dependency on foreign OEMs. The partnership aligns with the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' and 'Make in India' initiatives, aiming to build a self-reliant defence ecosystem.

Adani Defence & Aerospace and Sparton enter into strategic partnership to indigenise Sonobuoys for India PHOTO: ANI

Jeet Adani, Vice President of Adani Enterprises, stated that in a volatile maritime environment, indigenously developed, mission-ready ASW systems are vital to safeguarding national interests. Ashish Rajvanshi, CEO of Adani Defence, called the move a major step towards breaking import reliance.

Sparton CEO Donnelly Bohan highlighted the localisation of assemblage, creation of high-tech skills, and tailoring of solutions for the Indian Navy.

This collaboration enhances India's strategic capabilities while also opening export potential for advanced, India-made defence technologies. *—ANI*

Sebi: E-book must for pvt debt issues above ₹ 20 cr

NEW DELHI, 18 MAY

Markets regulator Sebi has made the electronic book mechanism mandatory for all private placement debt issues of Rs 20 crore or above and expanded the platform's scope to include infrastructure investment trusts (InvITs) and real estate infrastructure trusts (REITs).

The move is aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the Electronic Book Provider (EBP) platform.

The platform is now mandatory for private placements of debt securities, non-convertible redeemable preference shares and municipal bonds, where the issue size is Rs 20 crore or more, including single, shelf and subsequent issues within a financial year, said a Sebi circular.

Earlier, the mechanism was mandatory for those with an issue size of Rs 50 crore or more. Sebi has also extended products on the EBP platform to InvITs and REITs.

"An issuer, if desirous, may choose to access EBP platform for private placement of securitised debt instruments or security receipts or commercial papers, certificates of deposit and issuers constituted as REITs, SM REITs and InvITs can also access the EBP platform for private placement of units of REITs, SM REITs and InvITs," Sebi said on Friday. *—PTI*

- Earlier, the mechanism was mandatory for those with an issue size of Rs 50 crore or more. Sebi has also extended products on the EBP platform to InvITs and REITs

Registration made mandatory for LNG terminals

NEW DELHI, 18 MAY

The oil regulator has made it mandatory for companies planning to establish new liquefied natural gas (LNG) import terminals or expand existing ones to obtain prior approval, but dropped the requirement to reserve a portion of the terminal capacity for third-party access.

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board has notified Registration for Establishing and Operating Liquefied Natural Gas Terminals Regulations, 2025.

"These regulations lay down a robust framework focused on registration and oversight of LNG terminals, promotion of competition among entities and prevention of infructuous investments," the regulator said, adding that the rules are aimed at increasing the share of natural gas to 15 per cent in the energy mix by 2030.

An entity building or expanding an LNG terminal will have to inform PNGRB before taking the final investment decision. *—PTI*

US tax on remittances may hit Indian households, rupee: GTRI

NEW DELHI, 18 MAY

A proposed five per cent tax on remittances sent abroad by non-citizens is causing concern in India, as it could impact Indian households and pressure the rupee, economic think tank GTRI said on Sunday. The measure is part of a broader legislative package titled "The One Big Beautiful Bill", introduced in the US House of Representatives on 12 May.

The tax would apply to international money transfers made by non-US citizens, including green card holders and temporary visa workers such as those on H-1B or H-2A visas. US citizens would be exempt.

India, which received USD 120 billion in remittances in 2023–24 (28 per cent came from the US) will lose billions if the proposal becomes law. A 5per cent tax could reduce remittance flows by 10–15per cent, resulting in a shortfall of USD 12–18 billion annually, said GTRI founder Ajay Srivastava.

PHOTO: PIXABAY

Such a decline could tighten US dollar supply in India, weaken the rupee by RS 1–1.5 per dollar, and strain household consumption in remittance-dependent states like Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar. *– PTI*

INDIA–UK FTA

Duty cut on Scotch to help Indian distillers

NEW DELHI, 18 MAY

Indian premium whisky distillers expect that the duty concessions on Scotch imports under the India-UK free trade agreement will help improve their margins and speed up growth.

A lower customs duty on bulk Scotch, used by many Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) companies for blending, will reduce costs and make premium spirits more affordable in the Indian market, which is the world's largest for whisky, they added.

Under the trade pact, announced earlier this month, India will reduce duties on UK whisky and gin from 150 per cent to 75 per cent, and further to 40 per cent by the tenth year.

Home-grown players like Radico Khaitan, Allied Blenders & Distillers (ABD), and John Distilleries said the move will give Indian consumers more choices and better access to high-quality spirits.

PHOTO: X

Radico Khaitan, the largest importer of Scotch whisky for blending and which owns award-winning single malt "Rampur" and Jaisalmer Indian Craft Gin, said the FTA has "significant potential" for cost advantages through the expected reduction in customs duties.

Sharing similar views, Allied Blenders & Distillers (ABD), makers of Officer's Choice Whisky, said it has opened new avenues for collaboration, besides helping make the super-premium to luxury portfolio more accessible.

- A lower customs duty on bulk Scotch, used by Indian Made Foreign Liquor companies for blending, will reduce costs and make premium spirits more affordable in the Indian market, which is the world's largest for whisky

According to data from the Scotch Whisky Association, India was the largest market for Scotch by volume in 2024, with 192 million bottles exported. In value terms, it ranked fourth with exports worth 248 million British pounds. *—PTI*

Cruise tourism has vast scope in India: Expert

NEW DELHI, 18 MAY

India has the potential to become a powerhouse in ocean and river cruise tourism, even as volatility of airfares and infrastructural gaps like limited availability of quality hotels pose challenges for the domestic market, Thomas Cook India Managing Director and CEO Mahesh Iyer said.

Cruise holidays have emerged as a highly viable travel option by eliminating the complexities of multiple visas, offering seamless travel between destinations and an all-inclusive proposition of accommodation, dining, entertainment and sightseeing in one experience, Iyer said.

He said challenges include infrastructural gaps like limited availability of quality hotels, particularly in the 3-star plus range, which remains a constraint in several regions, especially in some of the northern hill stations.

Coastal regions benefit from dependable sea access, while certain emerging circuits face challenges with last-mile connectivity, affecting the seamlessness of the travel experience. "However, the opening of new circuits presents an opportunity to address this," Iyer said, adding that the volatility of airfares, which affects travel planning, budgeting and profitability, was another challenge. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Stano breaks men's 35km race walk world record

PARIS, 18 MAY

Italy's Massimo Stano set a new world record in men's 35km race walk during the European Race Walking Team Championships in Podebrady, Czechia, on Sunday. The 33-year-old Stano clocked 2:20:43 to win the gold medal at the World Athletics Race Walking Tour Gold meeting, breaking the previous record by a massive 57 seconds. Previously, the record belonged to Canadian Evan Dunfee, who had clocked 2:21:40 in March. Stano is a former world champion in the 35km race walk. He also won the gold medal in the men's 20km race walk at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021.—*PTI*

Ahead of India Series, ECB sacks data analysts

LONDON, 18 MAY

The England and Wales Cricket Board has sacked its data analysts, Freddie Wilde and Nathan Leamon, weeks ahead of the Test series against India, as head coach Brendon McCullum wants to put more emphasis on gut feeling and intuition. England's new World Test Championship cycle starts with a five-match series against a new-look Indian side, starting June 20 at Headingley. "Two of England's senior cricket analysts, Nathan Leamon and Freddie Wilde, are leaving the set-up in a move that suggests the national side will place less emphasis on data moving forward," The Daily Telegraph reported.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Scheffler takes 3-shot lead as Rai slips to 36th at PGA

CHARLOTTE, 18 MAY

Scottie Scheffler landed a superb eagle on the Par-4 14th as he went into a three-shot lead with one round to go in the 107th PGA Championship at Quail Hollow Club. Scheffler's 6-under 65 took him to an aggregate tally of 11-under 20,2 and he led Alex Noren (66) at 8-under by three as three players, including Jon Rahm (67), were tied in third at 7-under. Rahm was among those five shots behind. DeChambeau was six back. Indo-British Aaron Rai, who was fourth after the first day, slipped down further as he carded 74 and is now T-36th, down from T-17 after two days. Akshay. Bhatia missed the halfway cut, while Sahith Theegala withdrew due to a neck strain. —*PTI*

3 Indians cut as Diksha is set for another fine finish

NEW DELHI, 18 MAY

Indian golfer Diksha Dagar is in position for another fine finish as she carded a fine 2-under 70 to be placed tied ninth at the Dutch Ladies Open here. Diksha produced a nice finish with three birdies and one bogey in the last six holes and was at 3-under at the end of 36 holes with one more day to go. As for the other Indians, Hitaashee Bakshi, No. 1 on the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour, playing her first LET event outside India, made a great start. She shot 71-73 and is even par for two days and tied-26th, while the third player cut was Avani Prashanth, who improved by seven shots in her second round.—*PTI*

Brar shines as PBKS inch towards playoff berth

Thanks to Wadhera's 37-ball 70, Shashank's unbeaten 59, and a 30 by skipper Shreyas Iyer

JAIPUR, 18 MAY

Punjab Kings skipper Shreyas Iyer is pleased that his side displayed the right mindset after being put under the pump by aggressive Rajasthan Royals top-order batters as the visitors survived the carnage to put one foot in the IPL play-offs, here on Sunday.

Left-arm spinner Harpreet Brar bowled a match-turning spell after Nehal Wadhera and Shashank Singh made bruising fifties as Punjab Kings edged closer to an IPL playoff berth with a 10-run win over Rajasthan Royals here on Sunday. Brar, who came in as a substitute for skipper Shreyas Iyer who suffered a finger injury was introduced in the fifth over and the left-arm spinner walked away with an impressive 3/22 in four overs, helping PBKS to restrict RR to 209/7 in the chase of 220.

The Punjab side had earlier made 219 for five riding on an unbeaten 59 off 30 deliveries (5x4, 3x6) by Shashank and Wadhera (70, 37b, 5x4, 5x6).

With this win, PBKS (NRR: +0.38) climbed to 17 points and they are second on the table behind leaders Royal Challengers Bengaluru (17 points, +0.48) on net run rate difference.

The Ricky Ponting-coached side needs just one more point to secure a playoff berth for the first time since 2014. Brar, who mixed up his angles, trajectory, and pace with precision, played a big part in that.

His scalps included the 14-year-old sensation Vaibhav Suryavanshi (40 off 15; 4x4, 4x6) and Indian opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, who had launched a brutal assault up front with his (50 off 24).

Together they flew off the blocks with a stand off 76 runs in just 4.1 overs. Azmatullah Omarzai (2/44) then landed a double blow, sending back skipper Sanju Samson (20 off 16) and Shimron Hetmyer (11 off 12), as RR's chase lost steam.

Dhruv Jurel (53 off 31 balls; 3x4, 4x6) hit form to score his second fifty of the season, but it went in vain as Marco Jansen (2/41 in three overs) removed him and Wanindu Hasaranga in successive balls in the last over to end their chase. Jaiswal was in explosive form from the outset, smashing four fours and a six off Arshdeep Singh's first over.Suryavanshi matched him sIt saw the required rate jumping to 12 from under 10, and the Royals couldn't recover. —*PTI*

Punjab Kings celebrates the wicket of Rajasthan Royals' batter Riyan Parag
PHOTO: PTI

LSG VS SRH

HEAD TO HEAD	
PLAYED:	5
LSG Won:	4
SRH Won:	1

LSG vs SRH Match starts at **7.30 pm IST**

PLAY-OFFS RACE

Time for Pant to fire as LSG hopes hang in the balance

LUCKNOW, 18 MAY

Rishabh Pant will aim to hit the refresh button after a wretched run as Lucknow Super Giants make one last-ditch attempt to stay alive in the IPL play-offs race by winning their remaining three league matches, starting with a clash against Sunrisers Hyderabad here Monday.

Last year's finalists, SRH, are already out of contention and will be playing for pride, while LSG have an outside chance of sneaking into the last four if they can score 16 points with three emphatic wins. However, LSG's net run-rate -0.469 makes it virtually impossible unless their last three opponents are annihilated.

For SRH, it will be a chance for some of their players to shrug off the rustiness that has plagued their campaign through and through.

The likes of Nitish Kumar Reddy and Ishan Kishan wouldn't mind some runs under their belt before they leave the sub-continental shores for India A's tour of England.

However, the bigger context is skipper Pant's form, which has nosedived since his record Rs 27 crore bidding at the IPL auctions last year.

With 128 runs from 11 games at a strike-rate of less than 100 and an average of 12.80, it couldn't have gotten worse for Pant. Things can only go up from here on.

Pant's name is doing the rounds for the Test vice-captaincy, and even though IPL is a different format, getting a few impactful innings and guiding the team to victory is always good optics just before any major announcement. The forced break couldn't have come at a more opportune time as it must have given the stockily built Rourkee man a chance to go back to the drawing board and analyse his own game. —*PTI*

Jasmine Paolini of Italy and Sara Errani of Italy pose for a photo with their trophies after their victory against Veronika Kudermetova and Elise Mertens on Sunday
PHOTO: X / @JASMINE_PAOLINI

TTWC 2025: Manika, Manush-Diya pair win

DOHA, 18 MAY

Star Indian table tennis player Manika Batra cruised to the second round of the World Championships with a dominant straight-game win, while Manav Thakkar also made a confident start to his singles campaign here on Sunday.While the ninth-seeded pair of Manush Shah and Diya Chitale started with a win in straight games, the 14th-seeded duo of Harmeet Desai and Yashaswini Ghorpade failed to capitalise on a 2-0 lead and also wasted three match points to exit the competition in the opening round. Manush and Diya, who won their maiden WTT Contender title in Tunis last month, had no trouble in beating the Algerian pair of Mehdi Bouloussa and Malissa Nasri 3-0 (11-2, 11-7, 11-6) in 16 minutes. They will next face either the Korean pair of Oh Junsung and Kim Nayeong or the Kiwi duo of Dean Shu and Jocelyn Lam.

Manush Shah and Diya Chitale

PHOTO: X

Facing the unseeded French pair of Thibault Poret and Leana Hochart, Harmeet and Yashaswini bagged the first two games 11-8 and 11-6. The French duo won the fourth game 11-8 to take the match to a decider.

Harmeet and Yashaswini were in control, leading 6-2, and had three match points at 10-7 before allowing their opponents to make another comeback.

Harmeet also suffered defeat in his men's doubles opener. Pairing up with G. Sathiyan, the Indian lost 3-1 (11-9, 10-12, 16-14, 12-10) to the Austrian-Moldovan duo of Maciej Kolodziejczyk and Vladislav Ursu. —*PTI*

RUGBY STAR FACES LONG BAN FOR HEAD-STOMP

NEW YORK, 18 MAY

USA star Alev Kelter is facing a massive suspension after getting sent off for stamping on the head of Wallaroos centre Georgie Friedrichs on Saturday an act of "thuggery" that could prove decisive in Australia's bid to play in the finals of the Rugby World Cup this year.

Kelter, a three-time Olympian in sevens and bronze medallist in Paris, was shown a permanent red card in the 79th minute of the Wallaroos' 27-19 win at GIO Stadium in Canberra, in the second round of the Pacific Four tournament.

The 29-cap centre was tackled by Friedrichs, and as the Wallaroo hung onto her left leg, Kelter stamped her right boot down five times in a bid to get rid of the Australian defender. Referee Aimee Barrett-Theron blew up play and, after reviewing the incident on the big screen, was quick to give Kelter her marching orders but elected not to use a 20-minute red card because of the deliberate foul play. "Twelve blue (Kelter) is going to get a permanent red card," Barrett-Theron said. —*PTI*

EMOTIONAL FAREWELL

Ndiaye shines on Everton's Goodison Park goodbye as a new era beckons

LONDON, 18 MAY

Everton said farewell to Goodison Park in style as Iliman Ndiaye's double gave the Toffees a 2-0 win over relegated Southampton in their final men's game at the stadium.

David Moyes' side will move to the new 52,888-capacity Hill Dickinson Stadium at Bramley Moore Dock next season, with Goodison Park becoming the home of Everton's women's team.

The Toffees brought down the curtain on 133 years at Goodison Park with a comfortable victory over bottom-side Saints, who provided the ideal opposition to give the Grand Old Lady the perfect send-off in front of 39,201 fans.

An emotional day for Everton supporters was given the dream start as Ndiaye superbly curled home into the bottom corner after just six minutes.

Beto then had two goals disallowed for offside, but Everton eventually found a second in first-half stoppage time (45+2) as Ndiaye rounded Southampton goalkeeper Aaron Ramsdale to tap home.

But there was to be no farewell goal for the Gwladys Street End in the second half as Everton managed just one shot on target, while they needed a fine Jordan Pickford save late on to deny Cameron Archer to ensure the last goal scored at the stadium was a Toffees one.

Everton's 1,538th win in their 2,789th game in all competitions at Goodison Park (D660 L591) kept them 13th in the Premier League table.

The win over Saints also meant the Championship-bound side became the outright most-beaten opposition at Goodison Park in the Premier League. —*PTI*

MAX WINS F1'S EMILIA-ROMAGNA GRAND PRIX

IMOLA, 18 MAY

Max Verstappen gave his Formula 1 title defense a big boost with victory at the Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix on Sunday after a daring overtake on standings leader Oscar Piastri at the start.

The Dutch driver built a commanding lead, which was wiped out when the safety car bundled the field back up. He still held on to win ahead of Lando Norris, who overtook his McLaren teammate Piastri for second with five laps remaining.

Verstappen took his second win of the season, and first since last month's Japanese Grand Prix, and denied Piastri, who finished third, what would have been his fourth win in a row. Verstappen praised his Red Bull team's "fantastic execution all round" as the team marked its 400th F1 race with a win.

The start itself wasn't particularly great, but I was still on the outside line, or the normal (racing) line, and I was like, Well, I'm just going to try and send it round the outside—*PTI*

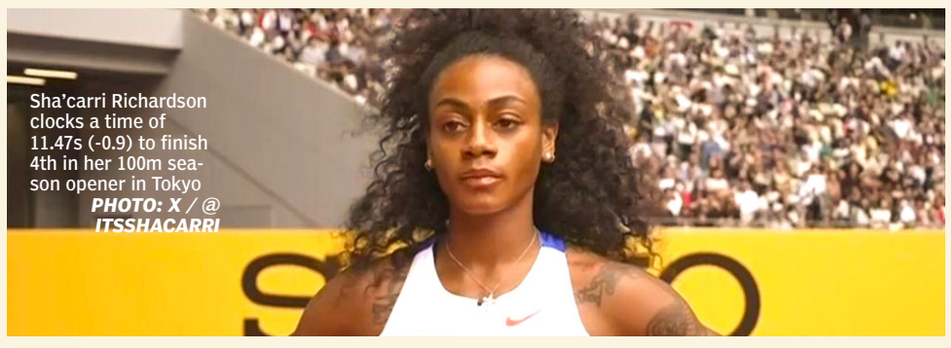
GOLDEN GRAND PRIX 2025

Carri starts season with underwhelming show

PARIS, 18 MAY

Olympic 100m silver medallist Sha'Carri Richardson underwhelmed in her season opener in Tokyo on Sunday, finishing fourth in 11.47sec four months before the world championships are held in the same stadium.

The American, who ran with strapping on her lower right leg, was slow out of the blocks and never led the Golden Grand Prix women's 100m, which was won by Australia's Bree Rizzo in 11.38. American Twanisha Terry, fifth in last year's Olympics, was second in 11.42, followed by Canada's Sade McCreath in 11.46.



Sha'carri Richardson clocks a time of 11.47s (-0.9) to finish 4th in her 100m season opener in Tokyo
PHOTO: X / @ITSSHACARRI

World champion Richardson will attempt to defend her title in the Japanese capital in September. "It's a season-opener for those athletes, and they will be very, very strong come the world championships," said Rizzo.

"I look up to those athletes, so to come out on top was pretty exciting for an Australian athlete."

Christian Coleman, Richardson's boyfriend and training partner, finished third in the men's 100m in a time of 10.11 sec. —*PTI*

Lisbon defends Portuguese title with final day win

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

Sporting Lisbon defended their Portuguese crown on Saturday with a 2-0 win over Guimaraes to hold off rivals Benfica on the final day of the Primeira Liga season. Both Sporting and Benfica were level on points going into their last match after a tense 1-1 derby draw last weekend left the title race on a knife-edge. Benfica needed to better Sporting's result to triumph, but drew 1-1 at Braga, although even a victory would not have been enough as Rui Borges' side triumphed and had the superior head-to-head.

Pedro Goncalves broke the deadlock in the second half, and the division's top goal-scorer, Viktor Gyokeres, notched his 39th league goal of a stunning campaign to seal Sporting's victory.Manchester United coach Ruben Amorim led Sporting to last year's title and after he departed in November was replaced by Joao Pereira, who only lasted six troubled weeks before Borges took over. Sporting claimed their 21st Primeira division title and could make it a domestic double as they face Benfica next Sunday in the Portuguese cup final. —*PTI*